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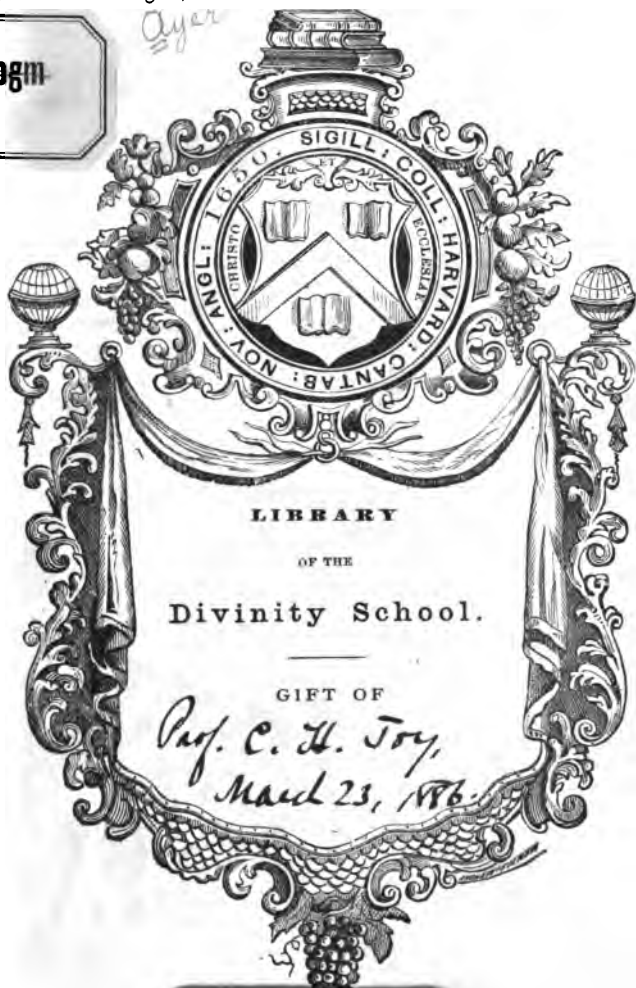
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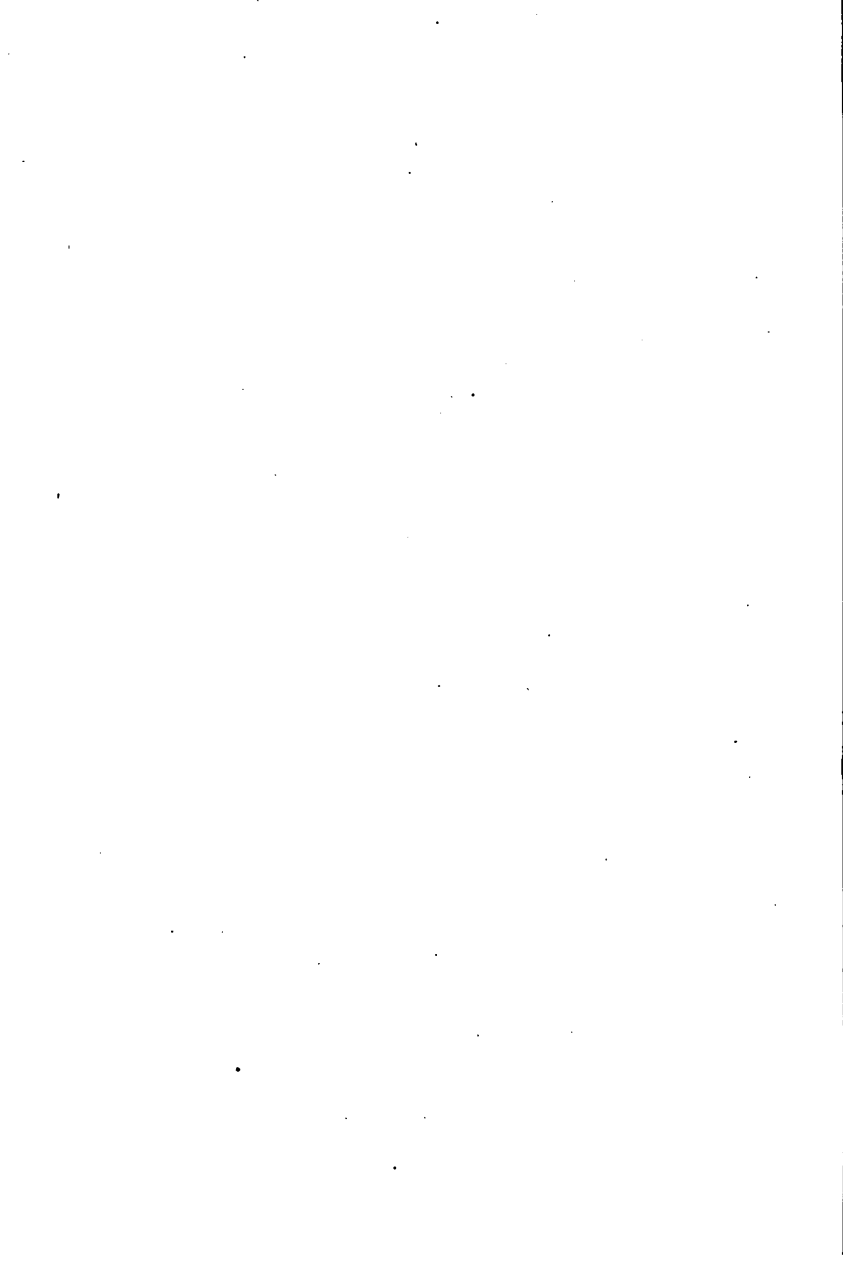
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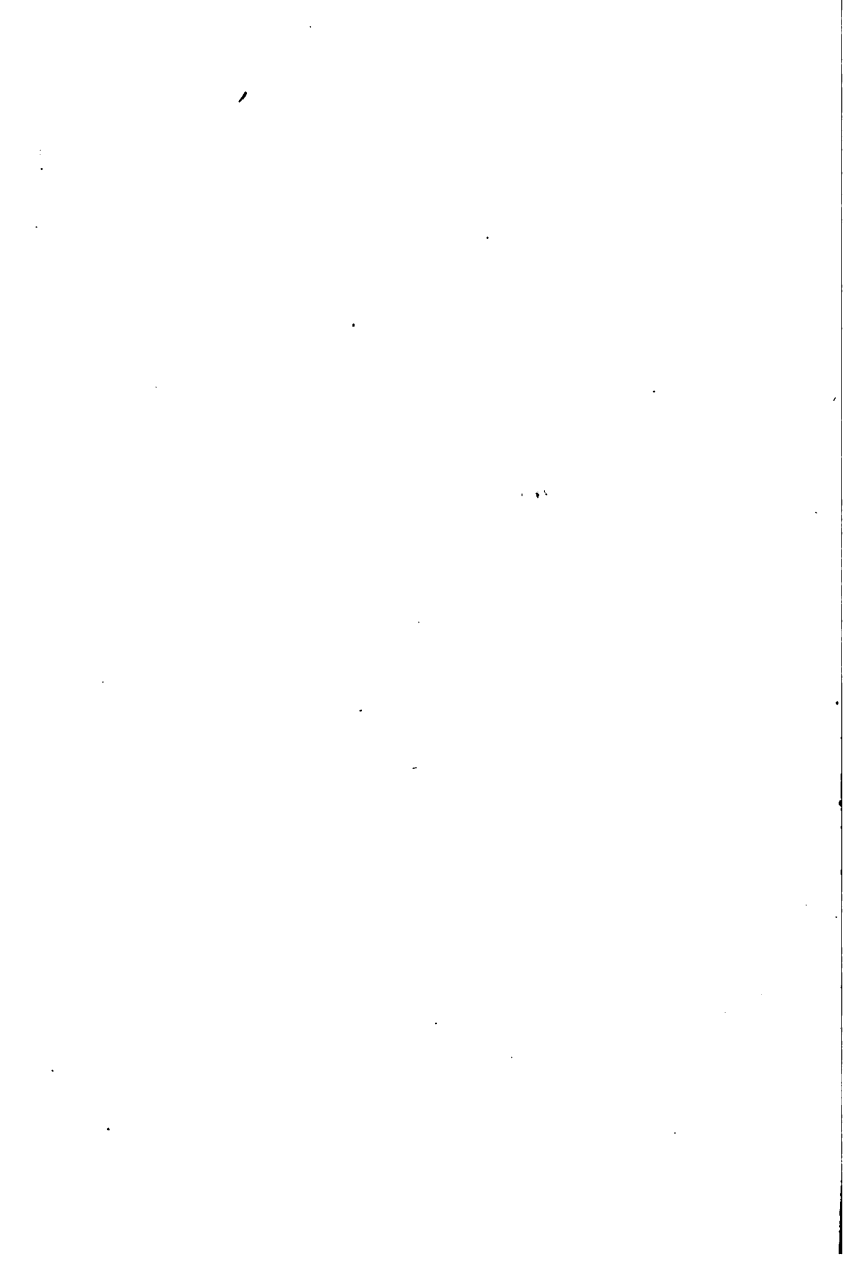
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INFANT SALVATION

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE.

BY
LEWIS M. AYER.

*Ον οί θεοί φιλοῦσιν αποθνήσκει νέος:
Ω περισσὰ τιμηθεῖς τέκνα!*

MENANDER.

"Weep not, the child is not dead but sleepeth."
JESUS THE CHRIST.

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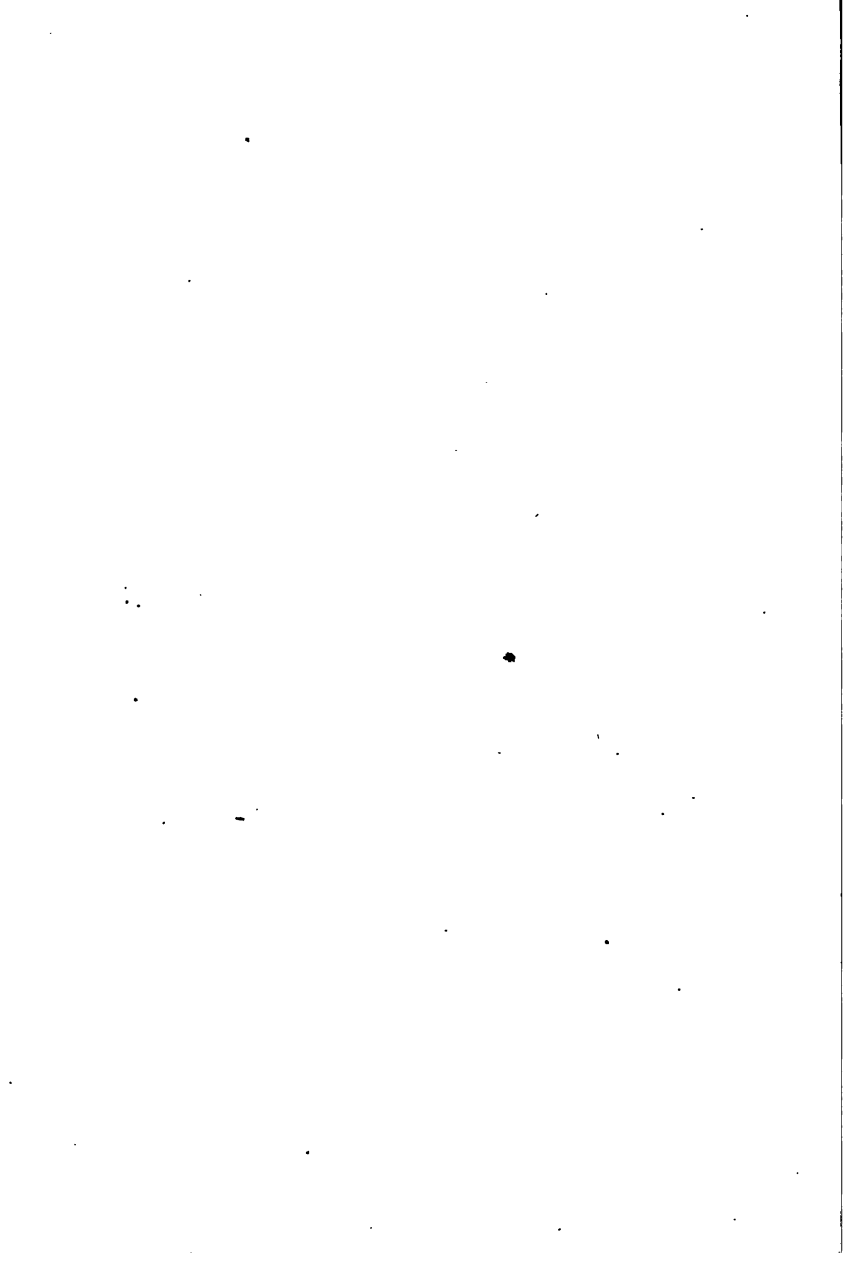
TO

All who can heartily say, with
Jean Paul Frederic Richter,

"I LOVE GOD AND LITTLE CHILDREN,"

This work is fraternally
Dedicated.

THE AUTHOR.



CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

STATEMENT OF PLAN AND INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.....	7
---	---

CHAPTER II.

OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.....	27
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE (CONTINUED).....	41
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

PROOF FROM NEW TESTAMENT.....	56
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

NEW TESTAMENT PROOF (CONTINUED).....	73
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

RAY'S OF LIGHT FROM THE APOCALYPSE..	90
--------------------------------------	----

CONTENTS.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGINAL SIN	109
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER II.

THE ATONEMENT: ITS UNIVERSAL ASPECTS	125
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER III.

THE ATONEMENT IN ITS RELATIONS TO MAN.....	141
---	-----

CHAPTER IV.

"DESTINATION" OF THE ATONEMENT.....	157
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER V.

PARDON, JUSTIFICATION, AND ADOPTION..	174
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VI.

REGENERATION.....	190
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER VII.

FAITH.....	210
------------	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.....	225
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.....	244
-----------------------------------	-----

PREFACE.

We believe it is the elder D'Israeli who somewhere says that, "a preface being the entrance to a book, should invite by its beauty." Without aspiring to conformity with this excellent canon, we shall pay heed to the still better suggestion of Spurgeon, who observes that "a preface being merely a porch, no one ought to be long detained in it."

A few words to our kind reader in reference to the work here presented, and we shall leave him at full liberty to bear and to forbear, as best he can, with what he may find in the body of the book.

More than four years ago the subject of infant salvation began to impress itself, with special interest, on the writer's attention. He talked of the matter at different times with several learned and distinguished ministers of the Gospel, who readily avowed their belief in the salvation of all that depart this life in infancy, but frankly confessed they were not prepared to show from Scripture, that there was any assured foundation there revealed, on which they could confi-

dently rest such belief. None of them knew of any thorough and complete treatise on the subject. And, after hearing something of our views, they all expressed earnest desire that the present work should be speedily undertaken.

Being at leisure during the spring and summer of 1876, the writer addressed himself to the task, and very nearly completed it in its present form. Since then it has been lying by, and has occasionally received slight emendations and retouchings in various parts, as rare opportunities occurred for such labor in the midst of constant ministerial and pastoral occupations.

It affords me pleasure to record here the fact that in my labor of revising and preparing the work for publication, I have quite lately been favored with some kind and timely assistance, on Part I, from Dr. T. G. Jones, of Nashville, Tenn.; and, on Part II, from Dr. J. C. Furman, of So. Ca. I am also indebted to my learned friend, Rev. F. C. Johnson, of Georgia, for prompt and cheerful help with the few Hebrew words which occur in Chapter iii., Part II.

The work has been withheld from the press thus long, because, among other reasons of a more personal character, the times have appeared unpropitious for publishing.

PREFACE.

I do not know that they are any more favorable now : but I have at length, concluded to let my bantling take its chance to "sink or swim", in the great ocean of books now flooding the land.

For fifteen hundred years the validity of ecclesiastical ordinances, and the authority for their use in relation to the salvation of infants, have been subjects of fierce controversy among the different schools of theology ; but, so far as we know, this little work is the first serious and deliberate attempt in all Christian literature, to expound and set forth in order from the Scriptures, the Divine system and complete method of infant salvation. Whatever other merit the work may have, or may lack, its pioneer character in this behalf will be readily recognized by all of every shade of religious opinions.

With unfeigned diffidence, the work is now submitted to the Christian world, with the earnest hope and prayer that it may contribute somewhat to the elucidation of Revealed Truth, to the comfort of God's people, and to the spread of the Messiah's kingdom.

Fair and candid criticism is respectfully invited. If there is sufficient merit in the work to elicit such criticism from Biblical scholars, the author will be pleased, and

also enabled, doubtless, to make many needful improvements in any subsequent edition that may possibly be called for.

To every one who may favor our little book with a careful perusal, we would modestly say, as he lays the volume down :

“Now, brother, if a better system’s thine,
Impart it frankly, or acquiesce in mine.”

In regard to the success or the failure of the work as a literary venture on our part, we hope to be able to obey the sage advice of Ansonius, when he says :

“ Sic fortuna juvat, caveto tolli ;
Si fortuna tonat, caveto mergi.

L. M. A.

P. S.

And now we have the additional pleasure of being able to state here, that our excellent friend and distinguished Christian brother, Dr. J. M. Pendleton, of Uplands, Penn., has done us the very great favor of revising the whole work with care and patience, preparatory to its immediate publication. May the good Lord reward him for his kindness to me.

L. M. A.

UPLANDS, PENN., July 16th, 1879.

INFANT SALVATION

According to the Bible.

PART I.—CHAPTER I.

STATEMENT OF PLAN AND INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

“I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”—*Ezek. xxxiii, 19.*

Christendom has undoubtedly come, very generally, to entertain at least a vague belief in the eternal salvation of *all* infants who depart this life in their infantine state. And it is remarkable that this notion has obtained prevalence in spite of the letter, the logic, and the spirit of various adverse formulated creeds and popular systems of religious faith. On this doctrine, if no other, Protestant churches are evidently outgrowing their “Standards,” and the people are leading their preachers. It would, therefore, seem to be an interesting, timely, and important work to inquire more thoroughly than has ever heretofore been done, into the teachings of the Bible touching this subject.

Before proceeding, however, to interrogate the Scriptures afresh in regard to this grave matter, let us make sure that we are not mistaken as to the views heretofore in vogue. For, to be able to identify the wrong paths often enables us, the more readily, to find and pursue the right one. Truth will sooner or later prevail over all error ; but it greatly facilitates success in the search after truth, if we can first clear the way of deep-seated obstructions. When we discover that the supports we have been leaning upon are rotten or untrustworthy, we make haste to find stronger and better ones. Divine truth in all its parts is correlated and harmonious. To err, therefore, in our apprehensions of any revealed doctrine is almost certain to lead us into false views of other associated doctrines. And, on the other hand, to obtain correct, clear, and precise notions of any one Scripture doctrine greatly tends to illuminate to our minds the whole field of revealed truth. The importance attaching to an inquiry respecting Infant Salvation is, consequently, very far from being circumscribed by the apparently narrow limits of this particular subject.

We have the distinctive views of ritualistic Arminians and pedobaptist Calvinists, so far as their respective tenets relate to the salvation of infants, set forth in clear-cut form

and very striking light in a small volume by Professor Krauth.*

On page 22 he says:

"As Lutherans, we have a clear faith resting on a specific covenant† in case of a baptized child, and a well-grounded hope resting on an all-embracing mercy in the case of an unbaptized child. To Calvinism the baptism authenticates nothing. What it is in any case, even as a sign, is a secret bound up with another secret. The most that Calvinism can do in the most hopeful case is to cherish a *presumption* in charity, that the child's parents may be elect, and a presumption on that presumption that the child may be elect, and therefore saved,—while in the darkest case the presumption is that the class of children it embraces is lost. The same element in Calvinism, which on the basis of a *secret* council forbids it to affirm of any one particular child that that child is lost, forbids it equally to affirm of any one particular child that that child is certainly saved: and the sort of presumption on which Calvinism argues that a few children may be saved, is overwhelming in fixing the conclusion that the great masses of children are lost."

On page 39 he affirms, with great reason, that

"Calvinism makes no proper position for infants in its system, but brings them in by after-thought."

And on page 41 he argues:

"That infants are with difficulty brought into the Calvinistic system—as indeed they are into any system which on the one side denies Pelagianism and on the other the objective force of Baptism. It shows that baptism in the

* "Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System: A Review of Dr. Hodge's System of Theology." By C. P. Krauth, D.D. Phil., 1874.

† The learned Professor utterly fails, however, to cite us the "specific covenant" to which he so boldly refers.

case of infants and in that of adults rests on exactly opposite constructions. You baptize adults because Baptism admits them to the Church; you baptize infants because they are already in the Church."

The glaring inconsistency and unscriptural character of such a system is indeed very obvious. For the Bible says explicitly there is *one baptism*. (Eph. iv., 5.)

To maintain his allegations, Prof. Krauth quotes Westminster Confession, xxv., 2:

"The visible Church * * * consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, *together with* their children."

And again, Westminster Confession, xxviii. 1:

"Baptism is * * * ordained * * * for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church."

On page 43 he says:

"Calvanism maintains not only the possibility, but the absolute necessity for the *regeneration* of infants, but knows of no means for that regeneration, and no assurance of faith that any particular child is regenerate. 'Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated' (Westminster Confession, x., x.), but the conception of regeneration as presented in the Confession makes it wholly impracticable to infants."

And this allegation he easily proves; for infants can neither repent of sin nor exercise faith in Christ.

Westminster Confession, xxv., 1:

"The * * * Church * * * *invisible* consists of the

whole number of the elect." (Do. ii.) "The *visible* Church * * is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

On this and other cognate passages which he cites from the Westminster Confession, Krauth remarks:

"These principles, in their connections, clearly exclude the entire heathen, Mohammedan and Jewish world from salvation. Connecting with this the doctrine that as is the state of the parents so is the presumed state of the children *individually*, and the certain state of the children as a class, it follows that the moral *presumption* is that each child of the non-Christian world is lost, and the moral *certainly* is that they are lost as a class. It is certain that no one of them is of the visible church, 'out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation,' and there is no evidence, no reason even, for hope that a single one of them is of the Church invisible."

Summing up on this point of Pedobaptist Calvinism, the learned Professor remarks:

"Surely this is a sufficiently liberal provision for damnation, but is it not open to the charge of being rather a parsimonious one for salvation?"

To which we respond, yes, truly! for so it does indeed seem to us. But how does the caustic Lutheran himself, and all other sacramentalists and ritualists, propose to remedy or relieve the harsh and parsimonious character of this excrescent feature of Calvinism? Why, simply by a *nolens, volens*, so-called baptism. This expedient, however,

appears to us to be grossly magical in its pretensions, quite as deficient in Scriptural authority, fully as limited and impracticable in respect to the human agency necessary to its administration, and still more inconsistent with that divine plan of *spiritual* salvation which the beneficent Father of spirits has revealed to men in the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This will suffice to show us the ground, views, and fundamental principles on which the belief is rested and the hope cherished of infant salvation by the two main theological schools, respectively, into which the Pedobaptist world stands divided, viz., the Sacramental and the Hereditary. They all coincide, however, in charging against Baptists that no provision, even of a patch-work character, "clapped together and quilted out of Scripture phrase" (as Milton expresses it), is made by us for embracing infants in the Gospel pale of salvation. A leading, fundamental ground of difference between ourselves and them (we may as well state here at once) is that we discriminate—as to us the Scriptures seem very clearly to do—between the kingdom of God and the visible church of Christ.

The object of this little work is to prove that babes are all in the kingdom of God,

and that without any human help or ecclesiastical or sacerdotal conjurations whatever. Controversy is not our purpose. Our pen is guided rather by the expository than the polemical spirit. We have simply set ourselves to the grateful task of showing, in the first place, from God's own Word, that he does save our little ones that die. We shall then attempt, in Part II., to show that there is no doctrine of Scripture, fairly and consistently expounded, which militates in any way against the salvation of *all* who depart this life in infancy.

Our plan of handling the subject will not, therefore, require us specially, in either part of our book, to combat directly the views and theories that have been promulgated by others; but rather to set forth our own. We hope to make it manifest that infant salvation comes within a Divine scheme, the transcendent potency and infinite perfection of which exclude and disdain all the impertinences and impious adjuncts of magical sacramentalism, as well as the supplemental figments of "secret council" or "all-embracing *uncovenanted* mercy."

We may well conclude that all which the Scriptures contain has not yet come to be entirely understood. When it is, it will doubtless be found that things undiscovered

at present are "reserved," as Boyle says, "to quell some future heresy, to resolve some yet unfounded doubt, or to confound some error that hath not yet a name." The more perfect unfolding of revealed truth is a very different thing, however, from adding to Scripture and "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Scripture is one thing; foisting into Scripture what is not there is quite another, and in every way a most pernicious and perilous thing. None of us may fully understand what is meant by being born of water and the spirit (John iii., 5), but to represent regeneration of soul as a thing involved in the application of water to the body of a person is manifestly to fly in the face of our Lord's declaration in the next succeeding verse, where He says distinctly that *spirit must be born of Spirit*. And in the eighth verse of the same chapter He explains and illustrates his meaning touching the new birth, by comparing the regenerating influence and operation of the Spirit, not to the gross action of water, but to the movement of the invisible wind. "So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Your spirit may hear "the still small voice," and your heart and soul may be made to leap alive under its mysterious touch, but you do not see with your physical eyes the Divine agent that re-

generates and makes alive.* And when God says expressly that he does this work by His Spirit, what right has any man to say that He ever does it by or through any other agency? His grace is sufficient. And "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation." (Luke xvii., 20).

Careful investigation of the subject which we have here taken in hand, will, if we are not much mistaken, greatly tend to illustrate the truth of the Latin couplet—

"Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet,
Et Vetus in Novo patet."

Which has been thus felicitously rendered in English*:

"In the Old Testament there lies the New concealed;
While in the New there stands the Old revealed."

Infant salvation is confessedly a subject on which comparatively little has been explicitly revealed to us. Both reverent piety and becoming modesty therefore admonish us to tread cautiously, examine prayerfully, and decide with great diffidence in respect to all questions and matters of interest pertaining to the subject, if we would avoid serious error and wanton conclusions that may tend to the disparagement of God's truth, and to the detriment of our own souls.

On this subject, the prevailing sentiment of

* "The Frescoed Chamber." By Hely Smith, p. 4.

enlightened Christendom, if we do not mistake it, is becoming more and more concurrent with the instinctive yearnings of the human heart. The Protestant world at least, in spite of theoretical Creeds, appears in the main to have settled down in the comforting belief that God, who has graciously revealed to us the grateful fact that "He careth for us," also feels and exercises a saving love towards our helpless little ones.

In this little volume we propose to collate and present the Scriptural facts and principles on which this prevalent faith may the more consistently and firmly rest. Some such work seems to be called for. For profane and impious scepticism and unscrupulous materialism, with their ruthless theories, do not hesitate to invade the precincts of this pleasing faith, seeking to mar its symmetrical beauty with the rude iconoclastic wand of a woeful philosophy,—a blatant philosophy which preaches despair to the living, and, standing by the graves of our loved ones, is dumb. Nor has the still more fierce and relentless spirit of religious bigotry scrupled to lay its mailed polemic hand on this sweet hope of pious hearts, and wring and wrest it from its divine pedestal. Some, as we have in part seen already, peck and hew and chisel it down to Lilliputian dimensions; while others,

with cracking tension, stretch it out a cold and lifeless thing fitted to the Procrustean gage of some antique mediæval theory of supralapsarian, or sublapsarian theology.

We heartily desire to turn away from all the inventions, speculations and theories of men touching this most deeply interesting subject, and find, if we may, in the Holy Scriptures, the true teachings of Divine Love in regard to it. May God's good Spirit so guide us in the effort, that we shall both derive for ourselves and impart to others a large measure of comfort, of settled hope, and a deeper and wider foundation for that inspiring faith in Christ that brightens life and links it to eternity!

Every clearer, broader, and more comprehensive view of divine truth to which we attain, must ever tend to strengthen faith, inspire love, and "justify the ways of God to man." And we are fully persuaded that though but little, comparatively, is directly and explicitly revealed to us in the Bible on this subject of the eternal salvation of infants, yet, quite enough is to be found there which, when brought into harmony with the other Scriptures, and construed consistently with the Divine scheme of human redemption, will not only establish the fact of infant salvation through the free grace of God, but shed

many rays of celestial light on other doctrines, in regard to which learned and pious Christians have long unhappily differed in their views. All true progress is but the development of Truth and Order. And when guided by the loving Spirit of our Heavenly Father, polemics tend to irenics. "In every age and country, as a general rule, tolerant principles have (however imperfectly) gained ground wherever Scriptural knowledge has gained ground. And a presumption is thus afforded that a still further advance of the one would lead to a corresponding advance in the other."*

Neither the certainty nor the importance of any divine truth, is to be estimated or measured by the greater or less space which the subject distinctively occupies on the pages of Holy Writ; nor, indeed, by the degree of literal and explicit enunciation with which it may be therein stated; nor, yet, by the number of times the same may be reiterated. We may even venture to assert that the leading, fundamental truths of theology are but simply implied,—taken for granted,—in the revealed word of God. The fact is, the whole scheme, character and compass of God's revelation to man, is eminently

* Whately: quoted by Broadus, "Prep. and Deliv. of Sermons," p. 196-7.

and conspicuously practical. It was manifestly designed and given for man's use, as "a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path." It does not stop or stoop to gratify idle or impertinent curiosity ; nor does it launch out into vague, profound or perplexing metaphysical disquisitions. Then let not sinful indolence, nor secular cares, nor Papal prohibition, nor formulated creeds, nor anything else restrain any one from the constant, steadfast and diligent exploration of this glorious realm ; for it is not only the Christian's precious privilege, but his sacred and solemn duty to grow both "in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Pet. iii. 18.) Jesus, the Christ of God, is himself "the way, the truth and the life," and in no step or stage of our heavenward progress can we ever afford to lose sight of Him. He must ever be our Cynosure, towards which the spirit within us should point with the constancy of the magnet towards the pole, while we essay to explore the vast rich realm of His revealed truth.

Divine truth, like all the attributes of Deity, must be infinite in its nature, scope, and bearings. But to our finite minds, it can only present itself in particular phases, and in partial aspects. Its features, forms

and effects will, however, always brighten, enlarge and multiply in beauty, power and perfection as we reverently, persistently and prayerfully study them. If, with meek and gentle Mary of Bethany, we take our seat at the feet of Jesus, we shall certainly learn and continue learning so long as we lovingly linger there. The truths that Christ planted here in the earth, were but the germs of celestial seed brought down from Heaven ; and as they grow and expand until their prolific arms interlock about the heedful hearts of the people of God, so do they aspire towards their higher native clime, where their flowers and fruits shall all be ultimately garnered to "make glad the city of our God."

After setting forth in order the comparatively few and scattered facts to be found in the Bible directly pertaining to our subject, we propose to proceed, with the utmost care and caution, to fit and adjust them to their appropriate places in the general structure of revealed truth. If we would, in this work, accomplish any good for ourselves or avoid the impiety of refracting or eliminating a single ray from the white-light of God's truth, we must of course be especially careful that our wish, in no case, shall prove "father to our thought." For our happiness both here and hereafter depends on our

learning to know and to submit ourselves to His thoughts and His ways.

It may safely be presumed that there is some foundation of truth in the instinctive voice of human nature, that, in spite of many opposing creeds, so generally and loudly echoes and re-echoes the faith and hope of universal infant salvation. For it has very correctly been said that "To the Christian the laws of nature are not laws only, but prophecies."*

The hopes and fancies that clung to an endless life beyond the grave, and often inspired the human heart with high thought and noble daring under the deep gloom of Paganism, though comparatively feeble and fitful, were still the innate sanction of the immortal soul to the truth of that life and immortality which were brought to light by Jesus Christ. And the "all things" that we are assured (Rom. viii., 32) God will give us with Christ, are, of course, all things that make for our good. And is there not good in the love that entwines our heart-cords about the tender forms and budding souls of helpless innocency? Does it not greatly tend to cultivate and develop all the better principles of our mortal nature? Is there not good in the hope that follows their little

* Westcott: "The Gospel of the Resurrection," p. 147.

fleeting spirits up to the Throne of God, and in the feeling that we have in them new ties binding our hearts to the Good Shepherd, whose love is coequal with His infinite power?

Was it not among the "sure mercies of David" that he could feel confident "though the child could not return to him, he could go to it"? And is it not idle and absurd to suppose, as some Biblical critics have done, that David could, as he manifestly did, derive comfort from that thought, if it reached no further than a reunion in death and dust of the grave, where "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom"? (Eccl. ix., 10.)

Was it only the providence that God exercises over his creatures here on earth, and the temporal value of such creatures, to which Jesus alluded when he said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God; but even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows"? (Luke xii., 7.) No, indeed! for this remark was only an illustration, by way of proof, of that which immediately preceded it, which was: "I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn

you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." (Luke xii., 4-6.)

That which is liable to be cast into hell, is surely susceptible of being saved in heaven. And that is exactly what the Master asserts in this scripture to be of "more value than many sparrows," though "not one of them is forgotten before God." He who feeds the young ravens and decks the flowers of the field with beauty and brightness surpassing that with which "Solomon in all his glory was arrayed," will not fail, it may fairly be presumed, to feed and sustain the flame of immortal life which he has planted in those little, frail earthen vessels that crumble speedily to dust in the furnace of affliction to which all flesh is heir.

What thus seems to be the natural presumption, from the broad general principles and teachings of Scripture, and from the instinctive hope of the human heart, would, most probably, never have been called in question by any one, if the inexorable logic of false systems of theology had not seemed to require it. How extremely and shockingly far such man-made theories can carry the minds and consciences of good and pious men, may be seen from the conclusion which

the amiable and eminent Dr. Isaac Watts and a few others have reached, in supposing that all infants dying unbaptized are reduced, body and soul, to utter annihilation. And this, or something similar, is but the logical and necessary conclusion of every sacramental and of every hereditary theory of the soul's regeneration and salvation.

We now propose, however, to advance in a spirit of candor and docility to the investigation of those things which are "freely given to us of God," respecting the eternal salvation of all infants who depart this life before reaching the age of moral accountability. And if the reader would accompany us in this research with unprejudiced mind, and a heart in full sympathy with the sweet spirit of the subject, let him resolutely expel from his imagination the theological bugbear of "original sin." For, though inherited thorough depravity is a sad and dreadful perpetual fact in human history, the Cross of Christ has canceled the *penalty* of that primal corruption, and men are consequently amenable only for their individual deeds conceived or done in the body. If this were not so, then under the damning and progressive power of sin, the fallen man must inevitably have speedily become, like the fallen angels, an out-and-out demon ;

but we discern that the seeds of both good and evil are intermingled in his moral constitution. Besides, prompt and eternal perdition must have been the penalty and portion of man's natural depravity, if the Cross of Christ had not at once and from the very first interposed in his behalf. "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," was "slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. xiii., 8.) In his fall, therefore, man fell upon the outstretched arm of a crucified Redeemer. Consequently, *the Scriptures of revealed truth afford no tittle of evidence, no shadow of intimation whatever, that any human soul has ever incurred eternal perdition on account of the natural and universal Adamic corruption.* We become alienated from God, and enemies to Him in our minds, *by our own wicked works.* (Col. 1:21).

When the inspired Psalmist, in deep humility and sore contrition of mind, exclaims: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;—and in sin did my mother conceive me," (Ps. 51: 5) he only expresses, in poetic hyperbole, his sense of that innate depravity, that human proclivity to sin which issues in actual sin as soon as the stage of moral responsibility is reached whence sin becomes possible. And in another place he says,

"The wicked are estranged from the womb : They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." (Ps 58 : 3.) Here the characterization of sin as the "speaking lies," shows that the phrase "estranged from the womb," and the parallel clause are not intended to be literal but hyperbolical ; since infants do not speak at all for at least a year or two after leaving the womb.

The Paradisiacal innocence of the first human pair is pictured upon the inspired page with supernal light and power, in the surprisingly brief and marvelously comprehensive declaration : "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." So, also, a volume of grateful truth is involved in the fact that little children, though naked, are "not ashamed."

When such heirs of mortality die and leave us, they seem to have come but as Summer birds that chirp and flit around making the one brief season gay, then passing away leave sighs in place of songs. If thankfully received as they are graciously sent, and properly surrendered when called away, they really prove to be ministering angels that,—

"Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way."

CHAPTER II

OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE.

"Wait for me a little, that I may show thee ; for there are yet words for God."—*Job xxxvi.*, 2 (*R. V.*)

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—*Psa.* 119 : 105.

God has not chosen to deliver his truth to man in a syllogistic or systematic form ; at least, not in such formal order as that our finite minds are enabled to grasp in whole, the Divine system on which it is reasonable to suppose all things are arranged by the Allwise Omnipotent.

Moral and spiritual truths emanating from God are, of course, addressed to man's moral and spiritual nature, and therefore our rational or purely intellectual faculties are not designed or qualified exclusively to weigh and judge the nature, character and power of that which is meant, in the main, to operate on heart and soul. And nothing seems really more appropriate and natural, than that the God of Love should address himself directly to the faculty of love in his creatures. It is quite enough for the mind to be

able to perceive that any given truth, which rises above its reach, is not necessarily adverse to the probabilities of Divine order. The wisdom and divine paternity of any matter strongly, nay, irresistibly commend themselves to the acceptance of the mind that sees, in the manifest purpose and power of such truths, beneficence, mercy and grace, all tending to the production of good to individuals and the whole world.

The various systems of theology that have been framed by men all err to greater or less extent, in attempting to bring infinite truth in all its parts within the compass of finite definite forms, and to measure and grasp with the intellect even those things that we are expressly told must be "spiritually discerned." We should remember that but one end of the linked line of truth, that is given out from the throne of God, has been permitted to touch this earth. Our world is not large enough to lay the entire chain of truth upon it. And in recognizing and admitting this fact in its relationship to moral and spiritual truth, so far from weakening, we greatly strengthen our defenses. Yea, we thereby "lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes." For while the admission implies a wisdom above our own, it yields to scepticism and infidelity no just ground on

which to sneer at our hopes or reject the verity of our faith, simply because we cannot expound in full the mysteries of God, or square and fit divine truth to scientific formulæ. When sceptical scientists shall have cleared human science of all inexplicable mystery, they may with greater show of consistency, though not in reason then, demand of Christians the solution of divine mysteries. As it is, we have great cause to be thankful to our Creator that in dealing with moral and divine truth, the heart is wiser and abler than the head to receive the doctrines of divine love ; for therein men must, after all, "walk by faith and not by sight." True, we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II. Cor. iv., 6), but "we see through a glass darkly, now," while we yet look forward to the blessed time when we shall see Him "face to face."

The great business of our present probationary state is to gaze on and study to comprehend "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And if our hearts have been burnished by grace, so as to reflect upon the mirror of our minds the true light of Christ's face, as he has most graciously turned it towards the children of men, we shall be able to apprehend some knowledge of the glory of God in the salvation of infants.

The exalted dignity of human nature as it came forth from the hand of the Maker is fully declared in Scripture. God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. i., 26-28.)

Yet, according to God's infinite wisdom, the creature designed by him to this high dignity, comes into the world the most helpless and dependent of all his animal creation. But the analogies of nature, as well as the declared purposes of his Creator, in regard to man, place beyond all doubt the fact that he must come into being with all the essential elements of his complex nature enfolded and embraced in the germ of his being. All the powers and faculties subsequently developed in the full grown man, must neces-

sarily have had their nascent elements created and primarily implanted in the newborn babe. And so uniformly and early in life has this fact asserted itself, that it has found expression in the aphorism that "the boy is father to the man." Nor, on any other ground than that all is in the child that is to come out in the adult, could we satisfactorily account for the superior care and interest which God, throughout his whole revelation, has expressed for the human infant over the young of other animals. And it is only in harmony with this fact that Christ, the incarnate God, saw fit to begin his career in human form as a little child. Consistently with this view of the case, the hosts of heaven honored Him at His birth, as on the subsequent occasion of his triumphant ascension into eternal glory. Being what He was, the angels shouted for joy over the babe of Bethlehem, and the wise men of the East came and paid him adoration.

If we look through the pages of the Old Testament we shall meet with passages that clearly teach the pertinent and very significant fact that men were required to regard children as "the gracious gift of God," and that God cared for and claimed them as his own (Ezek. xviii., 4.) "Lo, children are an

heritage of the Lord ; and the fruit of the womb is His reward." (Ps. 127, 3.)

When God gave His law to Israel through Moses, and most solemnly impressed on them the necessity of laying His words up in their "hearts and in their souls," He at the same time enjoined on them the duty of teaching the same to their children. "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deu. xi., 19.) Again, in Moses' solemn valedictory to his people, he charges them, as from God : "At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women, and *children*, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their *children which have not known anything*, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God" (Deu. xxxi., 10-13). The meaning of this last sentence seems to be that God would have the knowledge of himself to be the very first

lesson taught and impressed on the minds and hearts of little children who have, as yet, "*not known anything.*"

The inspired Psalmist repeatedly inculcates the same sentiment, embracing children. "Both young men and maidens; old men and *children*: Let them praise the name of the Lord." (Ps. 148. 12-13.)

Samuel was dedicated to the Lord and placed in "the house of the Lord in Shiloh," to serve him *as soon as his mother had weaned him*, and he worshiped the Lord there." (I. Sam. i., 24-28.) "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." (I. Sam. iii., 19). "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies." (Ps. viii., 2.)

God's tender compassion for infants is conspicuously evinced in the rebuke which he dealt to the refractory prophet Jonah, in regard to the threatened destruction of Ninevah. "Should I not spare Ninevah, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons *that cannot discern between their right hand and their left.*" (Jonah iv., 10, 11.)

According to the Levitical laws, the dedication or consecration by "singular vow" of no child under a month old was in any wise

provided for. See Levit. xxvii., 2-7. And according to Num. xviii., 16, only after it was a month old was the first-born child to be redeemed. If it died sooner, the parents were not obliged to redeem it. The Scriptures nowhere assign any reason, that we are aware of, for this notable peculiarity of the ceremonial law. And we can see no reason for it, other than that suggested by Prof. Bush, in his "Notes on Exodus." He remarks on Ex. xiii., 13, where the same matter is mentioned: "It died as it were to God, to whom it previously belonged." That is, if we understand him, God having seen proper to take such child wholly to himself in the eternal home, exacts no redemption for it from its earthly parents, who had not the comfort of it to themselves over one month.

No Hebrew ever imagined for a moment that the soul of his little one was lost to God, though it died before its circumcision on the eighth day. The salvation of all such was just as certain, in the Jews' opinion, as that all their female children were of the covenant nation of Israel, without the rite of circumcision.

It is mentioned among the sins of the faithless, idolatrous Manasseh, and as an offense that God specially reprobated, that

“he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom.” (II. Chron. xxxiii., 6.) And when God denounced, by the prophet Ezekiel, his heavenly judgment against Israel for their unfaithfulness towards him, it is mentioned as matter of special offense to Jehovah, that they “have also caused their sons *whom they bare unto me*, to pass for them through the fire to devour them.” (Eze. xxiii., 37.) “Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, *whom thou hast borne unto me*, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured.” (Eze. xvi., 20.) And the extreme height of their shocking and shameless profanity and wickedness is declared in the allegation that, “when they had slain their children to their idols, then they come the same day into my sanctuary to profane it.” (Eze. xxiii., 39.)

When Jeremiah, by Divine command, proclaimed to the kings of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that God was about to bring evil upon them, “the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle,” it was stated as a heinous enormity of which they were guilty, that they had “filled this place [Jerusalem] with the blood of *innocents*, and burnt their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake

it, neither came it into my mind," said Jehovah. (Jer. xix., 4, 5.) Truly a very forcible manner of saying that such cruelties were most abhorrent to the Divine nature. And referring again to the same crime in Jer. vii., 31, God says "which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart." If, as some think, the "*innocents*" referred to in Jer. xix., 4, were the martyred prophets, still the next succeeding verse expressly includes the children sacrificed for burnt offerings, and thus puts them in the same category with the innocent prophets of God.

Again, we are informed that the severe chastisements which Jehovah visited on Ahaz, were for,—among his other crimes and offenses,—“burning his children in the fire after the abomination of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.” (II. Chron. xxviii., 3.) It is here distinctly intimated, and in Lev. xviii., 21—25, explicitly stated that one of the abominations for which God cast the Canaanites out of their land and gave it for a possession to the Israelites, was the horrible crime of burning and sacrificing their children. And from this we learn clearly that it was not only the little children of the chosen people, for whom God entertains a tender paternal regard, but for all children,—Gentile as well

as Jew, Pagan as well as Christian. The covenanted and uncovenanted alike are His, and "*He careth for them.*"

In bringing his people into the land of Canaan, God did expressly forbid, beforehand, under the penalty of being stoned to death, their imitation of this abomination of its heathen inhabitants. "And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire." (Lev. xviii., 21.) "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Again thou shalt say to the children of Israel, whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed to Molech, he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given his seed unto Molech to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not, then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off." (Levit. xx., 1-5.)

The terrible visitations of Divine Providence upon the ancient Canaanites, and upon his own chosen people for their heinous and hideous outrages, in this regard, against the

instincts of nature and Divine precept, should teach all men everywhere, that "God will aid the helpless and plead their cause." For this horrible crime of infanticide, this "sacrificing of their sons and their daughters unto the idols of Canaan," especially Molech, the idol which represented the powerful and destructive element of fire, and "polluting the land with blood," the Psalmist tells us, "Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them." (Ps. 106, 38-41.)

And does not the striking similarity of punishment,—expatriation and subjugation under enemies—which God visited alike on the Canaanites and on his chosen people, indicate that his regard for time and eternity, is in all cases the same for the little ones of all people without any distinction whatever?

Among all the mighty signs and wonders which Jehovah wrought in Egypt, the last of the series and the most striking, awful and impressive, was the condign punishment and retributive justice which he inflicted on the Egyptians, in the sudden death of all their first-born. And this, we are distinctly given to understand, was on account of their cruel,

heartless, wholesale destruction of the new-born children of the Israelites. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord."

The nation of Israel was in many respects, as all allow, a type of Messiah's coming kingdom; and the full-blown flower and fruit of the gospel of Jesus Christ had its vital bud in the Mosaic dispensation. It was, therefore, strikingly significant that under that ancient Theocracy, God said to his unfaithful, disobedient people, in reference to their entrance into the earthly land of promise,—“Your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither; and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.” (Deut. i., 39). “And of that better land into which for us Jesus, as the forerunner, has entered, shall we not believe that our little ones, who died before they “had any knowledge between good and evil,” they shall go in thither, go to swell the number of the redeemed, go to raise it to a vast majority of the entire race, mitigating more than we can well reckon the great mystery of the existence here of so much sin, and suffering, and death.”*

The above sketch of the teachings of the

* *Hanna's Life of Christ*, Vol. II., Part I., p. 301.

Old Testament touching this subject, though brief, is quite sufficient, no doubt, to satisfy every one of the fact of God's peculiar interest in, and watch-care over the bodies, souls, and spirits of the infantine portion of the human race. That he distinguishes them in a very marked and peculiar manner above animals of lower nature, is abundantly clear. And is it not equally clear that he shows quite as much care for them as he does for adults? There are, however, instances specified in the Old Testament, of a still more particular, individual character, which we shall, in the next chapter, proceed to adduce as placing beyond all possible doubt the fact that infants are not only endued with immortal spirits, but that, dying in infancy, they are eternally saved to God. The death of such is always a euthanasia.

“Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care,
The opening bud to Heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there.”—*Coleridge*.

“They are not lost, but gone before.”

CHAPTER III.

OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE—CONTINUED.

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”—*Ps. cxix.*, 130.

In Chapter I. we incidentally and briefly alluded to the well-known case of the death of King David's infant child. We would here, however, observe further, that the marked difference of conduct and speech on the part of David, at the death of the little innocent child, and on the occasion of the tragic death of his vile and rebellious son, Absalom, can be accounted for on no other reasonable ground than that the father, as the favored prophet of God, knew and contemplated the awful difference of condition between the two in the eternal world. The adult man, who was responsible at the bar of eternal justice for “the deeds done in the body,” had suddenly been cut off and sent to his long account, “with all his imperfections on his head.” And though his most abominable and heartless crimes had been committed against the peace and dignity of

his own father, yet, in view of his eternal damnation, that right royal father, who had assurance of his own acceptance with God, was impelled, in sympathy and anguish of soul, to break forth in a wail of woe to which there has been no counterpart, no correspondent echo in the whole tide of time. "And wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II. Sam. xviii., 33.)

David knew that Absalom's death was bitter and eternal; death with "the worm that dieth not, and fire that is not quenched." His own death, he felt equally sure, come when it might, was, through God's "sure mercies," to be for him great gain beyond the grave. Truly, then, would David have been willing to die, could he, by so doing, have saved his son's life and soul.*

But how very differently do we find the same man behaving and expressing himself, on the occasion of the death of his little infant son! "And, he said, while the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious unto me, that the child may live? Can I bring him

* Witness a very similar magnanimity on the part of Moses. Ex., xxxii., 32; and the Apostle Paul, Rom., ix., 8.

back again? I shall go to him; but he will not return to me." (II. Sam. xii., 15-23.) There was comfort to him in this thought, because there was well-grounded hope in his heart; hope of a happy reunion with the immortal spirit of his departed child in "the better land."

Little versed indeed, must he be in the characteristic workings of the human heart, who fails to see in the conduct of David on this occasion, the indubitable indications of a calm and settled hope that fringed with soft and pleasing hues, the heavy cloud of his present grief. "Actions speak louder than words." "Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat." And, doubtless, while he ate, the grateful thought which he had expressed to his servants, was still lingering in his mind, and affording much relief to his sorrowing heart: "I shall go to him; but he will not return to me."

And surely king David's vision again ranged, by faith and hope, beyond this sublunary world when he declared, "The Lord commanded the blessing, even life for ever more." (Ps. 133, 3.)

The next instance from the Old Testament, that we shall now proceed to adduce as proof of the eternal salvation of those dying in infancy, is that peculiarly interesting and highly instructive case of the early death of Abijah the child of Jeroboam, of which we have an account in 1 Kings, xiv. Jeroboam the son of Nebat, "who made Israel to sin," is described in Scripture as an exceedingly wicked man. God having "rent the kingdom away from the house of David," exalted Jeroboam from among the people and made him prince over the Ten tribes of Israel; but he apostatized from Jehovah and led off all his people into the grossest idolatry and all manner of impious sins. In so much did he excel in wickedness and rebellion against God that throughout the whole subsequent history of Israel, as we have it in the Bible, he seems to have been regarded and constantly referred to, as the chief of "bad eminence,"—the standard example,—the archetype of a wicked and reprobate ruler. God said to his prophet Ahijah, "Go tell Jeroboam thou hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back."

Yet, it is a child, a little child of this

wicked idolater, that God chose to save to himself. All the other children, and every member and branch of Jeroboam's family, except this little child only, should be cut off and utterly and ignominiously destroyed. "Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it." (I. Kings, xiv., 11.) But, in his inscrutable providence, and according to "the good pleasure of his will," God saw fit to order in quite a different way the circumstances attendant on the death of the little sick and languishing child Abijah: "The child shall die: And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." (v. 13.)

So it appears that God removed, thus early, from the evil; adverse influences with which he was surrounded in his father's court, this little child, because there was "*some good thing in him towards the Lord.*" And the decent burial, and respectful mourning of the people for him, was to all Israel, and to us, not simply as an accidental and temporary circumstance marking and distinguishing him on earth, from the

very different fate and fortunes of all the other members of his family ; but it clearly indicated the wide difference in their respective fortunes beyond the grave.

Though so young that no personal act of his is recorded, yet in him there was found "*some good thing towards the Lord.*" This "good thing," whatever it was, must have been known only to God himself ; for, otherwise it would most assuredly have been stated. From the manner of its narration in the Scriptures, it would seem that God simply revealed the fact to his prophet Ahijah as the ground of his discrimination in the child's favor, without informing the prophet as to the particular and specific nature or character of that fact, further than that it was "*some good thing in him towards the Lord.*" It is sufficient for our purpose here, that it clearly appears to have been something which God approved and rewarded with his divine love and eternal blessing. For nothing can be clearer from implication, than that God removed him from motives of beneficence that distinguished him both in time and eternity, from all his vile apostate house.

The case is one of very deepest interest and transcendent importance ; because it shows beyond all question, that not the

children of pious Christian parents only, but those unconscious, helpless little ones of even heathen and idolatrous parents, who die in their innocent infancy, have God for their Father, and the Living God for their Almighty Saviour.

And herein do we not discern the natural and necessary correspondence that most reasonably obtains between God's own eternal justice, and the principles of polity and distributive justice which he prescribed to his chosen people by Moses ; "wherein the Lord commanded, saying, the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers ; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin " ? (II. Kings, xiv., 6.) And so, likewise, this same equitable principle of personal accountability is again clearly, though incidentally declared by God in his terrible denunciations against the whole land of Israel which had grievously sinned against him, and upon which he threatened, through his prophet, Ezekiel, to "stretch out his hand" and "break the staff of the bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and cut off man and beast from it." In this connection it is repeatedly and solemnly asserted that, "Though Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall de-

liver neither son nor daughter ; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." (Eze. xiv., 20.)

Then again we have the following in point :

" And the word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, ' The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge ?'

" As I live saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

" Behold all souls are mine ; as the soul of the father, so also, the soul of the son is mine : the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Eze. xviii., 1-4.)

We know from various incidents related in the Holy Scriptures, from profane history, and from observation of current events transpiring around us, that children are often involved in the *temporal* consequences of the sins of their parents ; yet, we may feel assured from the explicit teachings of the passages of Scripture above quoted, that no one will be condemned hereafter for the sins of another. And it is equally certain that no one will be saved on account of the piety of any earthly progenitor or friend. All are individually subject and responsible to God, and " every man shall bear his own burden." (Gal. vi., 5.) Whatever may be the influences of men's social connections in this world, the Scriptures plainly teach that each one for himself, must appear in eternity before

the Just Judge who says, "*Behold all souls are mine,*" and "who will render to every man according to his deeds." (Rom. ii., 6.) And the view of revealed truth that tends most obviously and powerfully to cheer and elevate mankind, and to honor God, is that which presents our Creator as a Father who keeps charge, from cradle to grave, of all his creatures from greatest to smallest, and makes provision, both temporal and eternal, for each one according to his several state, necessities, and circumstances. To his Maker, as his Master, each one "standeth or falleth." "God is able to make him stand." (Rom. xiv., 4.) Hence he commands through his prophet Joel: "Gather the children, and those that suck the breasts."—(Joel ii., 16.)

Among the many and mighty miracles recorded in the Bible, by which God displayed before the eyes of men his own almighty power in attestation of the divine mission and authority of his chosen prophets, the two most remarkable and supernatural are those in which "women received their dead, raised to life again," (Heb. xi., 35), when first Elijah, and afterwards Elisha, were each permitted to call back the departed spirit to a dead child. Since the beginning of the world, so far as we know, the dead human body had never, in a single case, been

resuscitated before that most wonderful man Elijah, in the sublime energy of his sanctified will and the mountain-moving power of his inspired faith, prevailed with God to remand the living spirit back into the little cold lifeless form of the son of the widow of Zarephath. (I. Kings, xvii., 17-24).

Elijah knew that the power of Jehovah was infinite, and just as well assured was he that the departed soul of that child, though severed from its body, was still in the safe keeping of Him who had created it. Jacob-like, he wrestled with the Lord and prevailed; grandly illustrating the eternity of that principle of God's spiritual kingdom which ages afterwards our Lord announced when he said: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." If the shadow of a doubt had rested on Elijah's mind as to the living and immortal state of that child's soul, or of its safe habitation with God in the Celestial Paradise, it would have been evidently impossible for him to pray with the power of faith that he manifested on that occasion, and to which God set the divine seal of his approval by restoring the life to the child.

So, likewise, in the case of Elisha's labor of love in restoring to life the dead son of the pious Shunammite. He worthily wore

the mantle of the great Elijah. And the same Almighty God who had authorized him, some years before, to promise this child to its parents as a blessing and reward from heaven, for their piety and their kind and beautiful hospitality to "the man of God," would, as the prophet well knew, keep that child in the hollow of His own hand, whether in death or in life. To that God he therefore went with a faith and a will worthy the mantle he wore. And God again here testifies that the little children are ever his to give, remove, or restore, "according to the good pleasure of his will."

It is most worthy to be noted further, that in these two several cases of the restoration of deceased children to life in this world, we have conclusive proof that in his Fatherly care and salvation of infants, God is indeed, "no respecter of persons." The Shunammite child was of the chosen Israel; but the child of the widow of Zarephath was a heathen. And our blessed Lord, at Nazareth, used this very case to teach the universality of his kingdom, and the beneficent spirit of his Gospel. There, when rejected by his own townspeople and "familiar friends," he said to them, "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up

three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." (Luke, iv., 25-26.)

John Calvin himself has said, (Contra Westphal., p. 792, Col. 2), "Unless God transmit His grace from fathers to sons, to receive new-born infants into the Church would be a mere profanation of baptism." (Quoted by Krauth, p. 37.) And the fact that religious character and spiritual grace are not heirlooms, nor matters of natural descent and family right, is abundantly evident from the various passages of the Bible above quoted, and from very many personal cases of which we have distinct account in Scripture; among which the case of King Hezekiah is particularly pointed and conspicuous. For the good Hezekiah was the son of the bad Ahaz, and father of the abominable Manasseh. And the case of the good King Josiah is precisely similar and to the same effect. It thus appearing most evidently that God does *not* "transmit His grace from fathers to sons," to receive new-born infants into the Church is a profanation of the sacred ordinance of baptism, according to the opinion of the great John Calvin. In which opinion we, of course, most heartily concur.

How pointedly and emphatically does our Lord upset and repudiate this whole incongruous and unworthy idea of his holy religion being a domestic affair, when he says so distinctly that it involves an essential principle of personal accountability which would necessarily lead, in many instances, to the disruption of family ties, setting "a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law." (Matt. x., 35.) And again where he so fully, strikingly, and unmistakably enunciated the opposite principle as the true genius of his spiritual kingdom, when he exclaimed "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. xii., 48-50.)

Now every unprejudiced mind must at once perceive that it is simply impossible to reconcile these fundamental principles of the Christian religion, as announced by its Divine Author himself, with the conception of its being, in any possible respect whatever, a hereditary, family matter.

All of every age, race, and family, who

have ever abused and debased their mental faculties by exercising them in disbelief and rebellion against God, can only be pardoned and restored to peace with Him through repentance and faith in Christ. And all whose responsible faculties have never been developed, and therefore never willfully turned against God, are in Christ, having all been "bought with a price," even his blood of atonement. By no other view is it possible to understand and harmonize all the revealed doctrines of Scripture. By this view it may be done; especially if we are careful to keep constantly in mind the essential truth of the whole system, which is both tersely and beautifully expressed by Vinet when he says: "Jesus Christ is at once the most absolute grace and the most perfect law; so that to believe on him is to embrace a grace and a law."* And to this let us add a remark of Mansel, which, if duly observed, will greatly aid the pious in all their honest efforts to comprehend aright the harmonious system of evangelical truth. Says he: "The doctrines of Revealed Religion, like all other objects of human thought, have a relation to the constitution of the thinker to whom they are addressed; within which relation their

* "Vital Christianity," p. 252.

practical application and significance is confined."*

God, our beneficent Father, unquestionably adjusts his law of life in Christ Jesus, in its mysterious functional operations (if we may so speak), to the capacities as well as to the peculiar necessities of all creatures made in His own image. Hence the Christian religion is as intensely personal in its character, as it is completely specific in its spiritual adaptations. So that the youngest, equally with the oldest, may at all times pray—

"He that doth the ravens feed,
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,
Be comfort to my age!"

* "Limits of Religious Thought," p. 158.

CHAPTER IV.

PROOF FROM NEW TESTAMENT.

"And all bear him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."—*Luke, iv., 22.*

Having seen, in our preceding cursory view of the Old Testament teachings, that God's paternal care extends alike over all his creatures; and that infants, equally with adults, are by him recognized and treated as immortal beings: and having seen in various cases, that God is "of a truth, no respecter of persons," and that he saves alike the soul of the innocent child of the pious, and of the reprobate parent, of the chosen nation, and of the heathen, let us proceed now to examine the teachings of the New Testament on the subject.

And just here we would again present the fact that Jesus, the Christ of God and Saviour of his people, having entered this world as a helpless little babe, thereby places beyond all controversy the truth that the infant contains in embryo all the faculties that the adult man is subsequently to develop.

For while in his virgin mother's arms at Bethlehem, Jesus was as much the Lord of heaven and earth—"heir of all things," as he was when afterwards "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i., 4.) On this ground alone, if there were no other, we could safely rest our faith that the immortal spirit of every infant is coetaneous with its body. Jesus "took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore *in all things* it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren." (Heb. ii., 17.)

To establish the proposition that infants come into this world possessed of immortal spirits, is to settle the fact that God cares for them *as such*. It was for the salvation of souls that Jesus died, and all souls are exhorted to "come unto him and be saved."

The advent of our Saviour on this earth, gave rise very speedily to a circumstance which furnishes strong proof of the immortality of infants and the eternal salvation of all such as die in infancy. By a strong and beautiful figure of speech, the prophet Jeremiah introduces Rachel as weeping and mourning in her grave near Ramah over the destruction of her descendants, and their being led away into foreign captivity. From

which captivity, however, it is promised that
“They shall come again from the land of
the enemy.”

“And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that
thy children shall come again to their own border.” (Jer.
xxxi., 15-17.)

The literal meaning and primary reference of this Scripture was, of course, to foretell those temporal calamities that speedily befel the Jewish nation; but the language, being figurative, is susceptible of other application. We therefore find Matthew applying it to the shocking circumstance of the murder of the little children that Herod caused to be put to death at Bethlehem, in his atrocious effort to destroy the new-born “King of the Jews.” This use and interpretation of the prophecy by the inspired Evangelist, shuts us up to the conclusion that as the banished children of Rachel “came again from the land of the enemy,” and were brought “again to their own border,” so, according to the meaning of the prophecy, and the essential proprieties of the figure, must those slaughtered children have been preserved and brought by God, into the eternal heavenly land of which the earthly Canaan was a type. On this blessed assurance, the exhortation was addressed to

the bereaved parents to "refrain their voice from weeping and their eyes from tears."

He against whom Herod aimed that cruel blow, was preserved and soon called back out of Egypt; and as long years afterwards he said to his disciples in the Upper Chamber, so, no doubt, he then at once said to those little spirits in Paradise who had been ruthlessly sent there for his name's sake,— "because I live, ye shall live also."

The Scriptures teach that Christ was perfect man as well as perfect God, and it is good for our spiritual health often to contemplate him with special regard to his humanity. But, at the same time, it is essential to keep ever in mind the very important fact, that Christ was, always and ever, an *official* personage, and therefore every *act* as well as every *word* of his has significance. This must at least be undoubtedly true of him from the time of his baptism and public entry on the great work, for the accomplishment of which he came into this world. We cannot, without impious profanity, conceive the idea of our dear Lord's performing a single aimless, meaningless act, any more than of his uttering an idle, senseless word.

His repeated acts of condescension and marked kindnesses, then, towards little children, meant much that is directly and indi-

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part or share as such in his kingdom." The Master, therefore, in graciously receiving and blessing the little ones, at the same time used the favorable occasion to teach in a most impressive manner, the true nature of the kingdom of God. It was a kingdom to be "*received*" as a free gift, man could never do anything to earn it. Whosoever shall not receive it, just as every little child receives it,—by the free grace of God,—shall not enter therein.

It requires no strain of imagination to picture to our mind's eye, even at this remote age and distant day, something of the changing manner and quickly alternating play of feeling, that expressed itself in our Saviour's face and action, on the occasion of this transcendently touching and beautiful incident in his life among men. Note the momentary but significant look of displeasure cast on the offending disciples, and the few but emphatic words of rebuke directed against their improper conduct; but anon, he turns towards the eager, anxious mothers and their pretty playful pets, his whole manner and expression softening, shading down and settling into the most enchanting smile of approbation. With gracious words of gentle, condescending kindness and tender regard, uttered from those lips that spoke "as never

rectly pertinent and important to our present inquiry; for we have not the least intimation given us anywhere in the Gospel record, that he caressed, blessed, or petted any other animal or thing whatever. But there was, manifestly, an evident and peculiar regard and tenderness in his manner of treating little children. He was displeased and indignant when his disciples officiously interposed to prevent the fond mothers from bringing their little ones to him. Yes, his disciples rebuked and would have kept back and prevented those that "brought young children to him."* "But when Jesus saw it, he was *much displeased*, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, *for of such is the kingdom of God*. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them." (Mark x.: 13-16).

In reference to this case, Dr. Wm. Hanna very justly, as it seems to us, remarks: "There was more than rudeness and discourtesy in the conduct of his disciples. There was ignorance, there was unbelief; it was a dealing with infants as if they had no

* Matt. (xix., 13), and Mark (x., 13), have it *ταῖς*; but Luke (xviii., 15), says *βρέφη*.

part or share as such in his kingdom." The Master, therefore, in graciously receiving and blessing the little ones, at the same time used the favorable occasion to teach in a most impressive manner, the true nature of the kingdom of God. It was a kingdom to be "*received*" as a free gift, man could never do anything to earn it. Whosoever shall not receive it, just as every little child receives it,—by the free grace of God,—shall not enter therein.

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man spake," we see him receiving and fondly folding in his Almighty arms those happy little babes. .

"Suffer the little children [all of them without exception] to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." The reason, the all sufficient reason, the Master himself here gives to all who will receive it, why little children may come unto him, and why they should not be forbidden to do so, viz. : *"Of such is the kingdom of God."* Such being of the kingdom of God, their natural and most appropriate place is within His arms, close to his life-giving bosom, breathing the breath of his blessing. Will not Christ own and receive unto himself in heaven those whom he takes in his arms and blesses here on earth? How can any man doubt it!

Let it be especially observed that Jesus did not, on that occasion, receive and bless the little children with the view and for the purpose of thereby making them heirs of the kingdom of God. The contrary fact is patent; for he distinctly declared that all such as they, were *already* of the kingdom of God, and that they, *for that reason*, should be suffered to come to him.

Now we have, in this delightful incident, the grateful Gospel truth of infant salvation,

so taught and so illustrated by Jesus himself, as to fix forever in our canons of faith, the eternal love of God for the little innocent children of men. And though the heavens fall, that love shall never fail.

But another, and not less deeply interesting and instructive occurrence in our Saviour's life on earth, which tends equally to settle the question of his saving regard for infants, is detailed in Matt. xviii: 1-14; Mark, ix.: 33-42; and Luke, ix; 46-50.

The "Twelve" had been reasoning and disputing among themselves by the way, as to which of them should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. As soon as they had come into the house, and had a favorable opportunity, "the disciples"—(*some* of them)—"came unto Jesus saying, who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven"? Thus propounding their inquiry in a very general, impersonal, and inoffensive form; but the Divine Master knew what they had been contending and reasoning about on the way, and, as Luke tells us, "perceiving the thought of their hearts," instead of answering their question directly, he in turn asked them a question: "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" And when, conscience-smitten and ashamed of themselves, "they held their peace," Jesus (according to Mark),

“sat down and called the twelve” (summoned together *all* of them), “and saith unto them, if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.” Then, (to follow Matthew), Jesus called a little child (*παιδιον*) unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, “verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Now, if men have to “become *as* little children” in order to “enter into the kingdom of heaven,” does it not plainly follow? is it not an irresistible conclusion, that little children, being as they are, are, as such, in the kingdom of heaven? If those who become as little children are saved, can we resist the inference that those like whom they become, are also saved?

This Scripture is so plain, precise and to the point, that it does really appear clear there never would, or could have been a doubt in the mind of any Bible reader, about the matter of infant salvation, if men had not come to entertain, so generally, the baneful heresy that the visible Church here on earth, was identical in its purpose, nature, range and constituency, with the Kingdom of Heaven. The dexter hand is truly an efficient instrumentality and ready helper to the

body, but it is not the whole body itself; and no more is any visible Church the whole kingdom of God. The Bible speaks of "the General Assembly *and* Church of the first born." The whole is greater than its several parts.

But to return to the text and subject immediately in hand. We learn from the Scripture under inspection, that adults who all have followed, as they grew up, the proclivities of fallen sinful nature, and become by their evil works servants of Satan, need absolutely to be "*converted*," turned about and brought back into a state and condition that our Saviour, by this apt and most forcible "object lesson," described as *the* state and condition of little children. "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself *as this little child*, the same is great in the kingdom of heaven."

Mark, with his usual fine and finishing touch to every picture he presents of our Lord, has not omitted to mention in this case, that Jesus, while he talked to them, *took up the little child in his arms*. "And when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: And whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me [only], but Him that sent me." Now would

Jesus, the divine official personage, the Anointed of God, whose meat and drink it was to do his Father's will, have taken up into his arms and thus spoken of that which did not belong to the kingdom of heaven? He did not reciprocate the kiss of Judas, but John, we know, leaned at leisure upon his breast.

By the lesson given at that time, our Lord aimed to enforce on his disciples, then and always, a childlike, humble spirit; but we press the point also that the state and character of the little child, is here obviously and expressly used by him, as illustrative of the character and the state to which conversion brings the repentant, believing adult.*

It, therefore, would not have answered to the full meaning and purpose of the lesson given on that occasion, for the Lord to have made use, as illustrative of his doctrine, of any other animal or thing;—for instance, a meek and gentle dove, or the most humble, harmless lamb—though either of those animals would, quite as well, have served the simple purpose of illustrating mere humility and meekness. But that little child was one “of such” as possess immortal souls, and therefore, in its guileless innocence, a fitting specimen and an all-sufficient sample of such souls as shall enter into the kingdom of

heaven. Little children being heirs in that kingdom, stand in the peculiar relation to the blessed Redeemer, that we find him here publicly recognizing and enforcing on the world with both promise and threat.

Observe well that when, with the little one in his arms, he says "whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me," (Matt. v. 5; Mark, v. 37), he has not yet made any,—the slightest,—distinction whatever, between the converted, believing, child-like little one, and the literal, real child that was in his arms. The point of distinction,—the one point on which so many are disposed to run away from the lesson, and lose sight altogether of that point of it which pertains literally and particularly to actual infants,—comes in the 6th, the next succeeding verse of Matthew, and not until we reach the 42d verse of Mark's narrative: Luke omitting it altogether.

That distinctive point has reference to the matter of offending "one of these little ones which *believe* in me." And the nature of the "offending" here alluded to, is most probably such acts of hatred towards divine truth, and opposition to true spiritual piety and obedience to God, as are calculated and intended to seduce or force *believing* souls away from their dutiful allegiance and service to their God and Saviour.

But freely admitting that this portion of our Lord's remarks could apply only to those "little ones which *believe* in him," where is the necessity or the warrant for excluding from the promised blessing of *receiving him*, "whosoever shall receive one of such children in his name" as he then actually held in his blessed arms? Is it not one of the bright and characteristic marks of Christian conversion and true godliness, that we do, under the inspiring influence of Christ's Spirit, provide for and "*receive*" in his holy name such little children into personal adoption, foundling hospitals, orphan asylums, and similar charitable institutions? The ante-christian world never knew of any such eleemosynary establishments. They are the legitimate fruit of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, working its way in and over this world. And the history of modern civilization shows that countries, communities, and peoples, have actually received Christ, and Him that sent him, in blessings and prosperity, much in proportion as they have "received," nurtured, and provided for helpless little children in the spirit and name of Him that redeemed them all with the price of his own precious blood. This phase of Christian history in the world, is itself a very satisfactory exposition of

the meaning of our Lord's remarks on that occasion.

Then, again, it is obvious that John so understood Jesus at the time he taught them this truth. If whosoever received even little helpless babes in his name should receive him and be blessed of him, John saw grounds to doubt the correctness of his own course and the course of those who acted with him when, some time previous, they "forbade" one whom they saw casting out demons in his name.

Up to the time of this impressive object lesson, which Jesus gave his disciples with the little child, John evidently had no misgiving, no shadow of doubt as to the correctness and strict propriety of his action in the case of forbidding to which he now referred. The "little ones" who *believed* in Jesus and *followed* him, John perfectly understood, were acknowledged by him as friends and disciples. Why was it then that he now came to have any doubts as to the propriety of his course when he "forbade" one who did, or at least pretended to do, a good deed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, simply, according to his own statement of the matter, "*because he followeth not us?*" Is it not plain that the doubt in regard to the rectitude of his course, was raised in his

mind by the fact that he now learned from the Master; that both believing and literal following were not essential to true and acceptable discipleship in all persons and under all circumstances? And what was there in all that Jesus said and did on this occasion to make this impression on John's mind, except the fact that he was taught clearly to understand, from all that Jesus had done and said, that innocent little children, who though they cannot *believe or follow*, were yet accepted of God, and put in the same category with faithful believing and following disciples? In no other way can we satisfactorily or reasonably explain why it was that John was moved to propound such an apparently abrupt question, and one that, on any other hypothesis than the one we have suggested, would certainly have been totally irrelevant to the whole subject matter about which the Master was discoursing.

The reply of Jesus to John, not only left unqualified all he had said in regard to little children, but went so much further as to say in regard even to responsible adults that, "he that is not against us, is on our part." Therefore, "forbid him not." Who, then, shall dare to forbid the irresponsible, unoffending little ones and cut them off from

Christ? Men may exclude them from their systems of salvation, or seek to decimate their ranks with magic "sacraments"; but thanks be to God! the combined powers of earth and hell, cannot pluck one of them out of the hand of Him who shrives them all in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Ryland remarks, with a logic as irrefragable as it is terse, that, "If baptism be the medium of forgiveness and salvation, then the unbaptized are lost."* And it is but a shallow delusion, and irreverent sham, and a mere sop to the Cerberus of Common Sense to talk, in this connection, of the "uncovenanted mercy of God," as if there was any such mercy suggested in the word of God, or a possible existence of any covenant of grace or salvation not embraced and revealed in the gospel of Christ. That system of theology which is constrained to resort to such an unwarrantable expedient, must be lamentably faulty in its superstructure, if not in its basal idea. In a consistent evangelical system of spiritual religion, there is no possible place or footing left for extra covenantal any more than for sacramental salvation. *Aut Christos aut nihil!*

* Lectures on the Apocalypse, p. 48.

“CHILD, there is One, the High above all Height,
Who doth not scorn thee ;
Ever, from Him, may beams of Heavenly light
Comfort, but warn thee
That, from youth's innocence, each proud removal
Is a departure from his blest approval.”

—*H. H. Weld.*

“How oft, heart-sick and sore,
I've wished I were, once more,
A little child!”—*Mrs. Southey.—et alia.*

CHAPTER V.

NEW TESTAMENT PROOF CONTINUED.

"The Lord commanded the blessing, even life for ever more." (*Ps.* 133, 3.)

"I am the resurrection, and the life." (*Jesus—John*, *XL*, 25.)

There is another point of great interest connected with the subject matter with which the last chapter closed, which we must go on to notice. The Master in the course of his remarks about little children, took occasion to say to his Apostles: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels* do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (*Matt.*, *xviii.*, 10.) Here the words "little ones" may refer to both infants and believers; but the reference, to say the least of it, is most direct

* "Some suppose the words 'their angels' to mean Christ's disciples themselves, regarded as spirits in their heavenly state, where they are to dwell in the immediate presence of God for ever. Their high destiny, and the close relation in which they stand to God, make it a heinous crime to neglect either them or their interests. Others find here a reference to guardian angels, watching over the interests of God's people on earth. Others again (not questioning the ministry of angels) regard these words as a figure derived from the attention given by the sovereign and his ministers, in a well-governed earthly kingdom, to all the interests of the faithful subjects." (*Ann. Para. Bible in loco.*)

Any one of these interpretations would sustain the gist of our argument from the text of Scripture.

to little children such as the one the Speaker then held, for the remark is not *such* "little ones," but "*these* little ones," and he is clearly not speaking *of* but *to* the Twelve.

The "Twelve" are here cautioned against despising such, on the ground of their exalted favor in heaven; "their angels do always behold the face of my Father," said the Lord. May we not fairly understand the import of the Lord's words to be: they are accepted of God just the same as ye "Twelve" are, therefore despise them not on account of their supposed weakness, strong angels stand before the throne of the Almighty Father to represent their interests in heaven. And now observe the significant change of the pronoun from "*my*" in v., 10 to "*your*" in the 14th verse. After declaring that the Son of Man came to save the lost, and how he would, as the Good Shepherd, seek after and save his *straying* sheep, the Lord evidently recurs to that point of the subject which had so particularly interested John; the including of little ones, such as the one he held in his arms, among all those whose angels "do always behold the face of *my* Father which is in heaven." And he says, in effect, as I seek for and save the lost, such as you all have been, "even so it is not the will of *your* Father which is in heaven,

that one of *these* little ones should perish." As *my* Father, through me, has become *your* Father, you should understand aright his will in regard to these innocents, that you may not despise or neglect them, or forbid their coming to me. It is not His will "that one of *these* little ones should perish"; therefore, see to it that, where they live, they shall be looked after and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Your Father is also their Father.

If this, or something very like this, is not the true meaning and import of the lesson taught by Jesus on that occasion, it will be difficult to account for the remarkable change in the phraseology, from "*my* Father" to "*your* Father" in such close connection with what is declared to be God's regard for "these little ones."

And who knows but that from this very day's lesson—from both the rebuke and the information which John received in it—he learned for all after time to apply to the brethren the tender and affectionate appellation of "little children," by which we find him so frequently designating the flock of Christ? By this he would seem to have cherished, as a precious truth, the grateful fact that little children do indeed constitute part and parcel of the glorious kingdom of God.

It is very true, and a very needful thing for us to know, that we must be in some sense like little children before we can enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but that does not imply that they must become like us before they can enter it.

Dr. Wm. Hanna, in his life of Christ,* makes some very apposite remarks in reference to this interesting incident of Scripture, on which we have just been commenting, which we cannot refrain from quoting here. He says: "It is not, however, upon any single saying of our Lord that we ground our belief that all who die in infancy are saved; it is upon the whole genius, spirit and object of the great redemption. There is, indeed, a mystery in the death of infants. No sadder nor more mysterious sight upon this earth than to see a little innocent, unconscious babe struggling through the agonies of dissolution, bending upon us those strange, imploring looks which we long to interpret, but cannot, which tell us only of a suffering we cannot assuage, convey to us petitions for help to which we can give no reply. But great as the mystery is which wraps itself around the death, still greater would be that attending the resurrection of infants if any

* Vol. II., part I., page 300.

of them perish. The resurrection is to bring to all an accession of weal or woe. In that resurrection infants are to share. Can we believe that, without an opportunity given of personally receiving or rejecting Christ, they shall be subjected to a greater woe than would have been theirs had there been no Redeemer and no redemption? Then to them his coming into the world had been an unmitigated evil. Who can believe it to be so? Who will not rather believe, that even as without sinning after the similitude of Adam's transgression, they became involved in death; even so, though not believing here—the chance [or talent] not given them—they will share in the benefit of that life which the second, the spiritual Head of our race, has brought in and dispensed."

THE CHILDREN CRYING IN THE TEMPLE.

Another direct and very striking evidence of the peculiar estimation in which little children were held by our Saviour is furnished to us by Matthew, in ch. xxi., 15, 16: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children (*τοὺς παῖδας**) crying in the

* Literally, "those boys."

temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

This is a free rendering by our Lord of Ps. viii., 2, which some, we know, take figuratively, referring it for its due counterpart to Matt. xi., 25; where our Lord says: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," etc. But be that as it may be, and allowing the language of the Psalmist to embrace the idea in full which Jesus expresses in Matt. xi., 25, where "babes" most probably mean humble, meek and docile believers; still it is beyond doubt that here, in Matt. xxi., 15, 16, the Lord himself applies it to the actual, real children who were shouting hosannas to him in the temple court.

In the light of this, our Lord's application of Ps. viii., 2, the meaning of the Psalmist has been well rendered in paraphrase, thus: "The instinctive admiration of thy works, which is shown even by very young children, strongly rebukes those who would malignantly question thy being, or obscure thy

glory.”* The corresponding sense, then, in the text here before us, would be: “If, as your Scriptures show, God is praised by infantine admiration of his works, surely children’s hosannas to the divine Son of David are not to be rebuked.” And, whatever other signification or extent of meaning the original words of the prophecy may have had, the use to which the Master puts the words of the prophecy in this place, sets the fact beyond controversy, that God has ordained and “perfected praise” to himself even out of the mouths of “babes and sucklings.” Jesus, the Son of God and Saviour of his people, complacently received and approved such praise to himself in the temple on earth; how is it possible to conclude that he will exclude it from the courts of heaven? They that love and praise him here shall love and praise him more perfectly above.

“Those that be planted in the house of the Lord,
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.” (Ps. 92, 13.)

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,” be they young or old, big or little, high or low. And all alike who are saved at all, are saved by the free gift of grace

* This follows the Septuagint., Anno. Para. Bible, note on Ps. viii., 2.

through Him that willingly became partaker of flesh and blood, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (Heb. ii., 14.)

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.

We have, indeed, no authority to say that if God sees fit to apply his sovereign decrees of predestination and election to the souls of new-born babes, in such way as to choose some dying in that infantine state, to eternal bliss and leave others to eternal misery, such discrimination would not be in accord with infinite righteousness. For there is nothing in fallen human nature that can set up the shadow of a claim to favor at God's hands. And we reverently recognize the obvious truth that "the Divine will is the highest rule of justice." We argue, however, that from all that seems to be revealed in Scripture touching the matter of infant salvation; no such discrimination exists in the Divine counsels. But on the contrary, very strong and conclusive proofs are to be derived from the sacred Book, going to show that all irresponsible human beings that die in that state are eternally saved.

We have not relied on our own speculations, but preferred rather to search the

Scriptures and humbly accept their plain teaching in regard to the whole subject ; for whether God has concealed or revealed the truth in this regard, is a simple question of fact. We are at the same time, however, to bear in mind, as we have heretofore remarked, that very many of the most important and fundamental tenets which all Christendom holds to be amply revealed in Scripture, are not matters of precise and explicit enunciation, but of fair deduction and clear inference. The learned and distinguished Dr. John Dick declares only what the common sense of all must recognize as true, when he says: "Legitimate inferences from Scripture are of the same authority with Scripture itself." (Theol., Vol. I., p. 350.) The utmost precaution should always, of course, be taken that our inferences be strictly legitimate. We trust and believe that we have already, in this little work, made it appear that a belief of the eternal and blissful salvation of all souls departing this life anterior to the period of moral accountability, is by no means the least amply supported among that class of doctrines which rest on processes of deduction from plain Biblical revelations.

The Scriptures attribute the sinner's non-election to eternal life invariably to his own

fault. He is rejected of God and condemned on account of "deeds done in the body." Then all must be chosen "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," to the pardon and justification of God, the Father, who survive not long enough in this world of sin and temptation to do anything good or bad. In the economy of grace, privileges are the foundation of duty. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." God's discrimination between the souls of his creatures, in their relations to the future life, seems to take effect only on those who are morally responsible. The argument on this point properly belongs to Part II. of this work, and there we propose to treat it at some length; but we must briefly glance at it here lest we be understood as leaning to the heresy of synergism, which we utterly eschew. We fully agree with Calvin when he says, "They who ascribe God's election to merits, are wiser than they ought to be."* Nevertheless it may be given us to see upon what class of his creatures this discriminative decree takes effect, without our being able to discern the secret cause thereof in the Divine Mind. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."†

*Institutes: 6th Amer. Ed. Vol. II, p. 160.

†"The whole language of Scripture upon this subject implies," (says

While it is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," the calling and "purpose of God according to election," is evidently not a matter of caprice, or of arbitrary decree with Deity. The non-elect and reprobate are everywhere in Scripture set forth and described as those who "reply against God," and in the licentious exercise of their own self-will "resist his will." Christ says of all such, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John v., 40). The decrees of election, most evidently, then, are operative in subduing and converting the developed and perverted faculties of the human mind. And it follows that the Divine discriminative election has not to do with those whom God foresees shall not live to the period of willing against His will.

We are fortunate and happy in being able to quote in corroboration of this view, so high and so orthodox an authority as that of Dr. J. M. Pendleton. "Calling and justification are inseparable from 'repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Repentance and faith, then, not to name other things, are means through which

Dr. A.A. Hodge in his "Outlines of Theology," p. 176), "that the 'elect' are chosen as the objects of eternal love, not from the number of creatable, but from the mass of *actually sinful men*." In confirmation of which he cites, John xv., 19; Rom. xi., 5, 7.

the purpose of God in election is accomplished. God, therefore, in predestinating the salvation of his people, predestinated their repentance, and faith and all other means necessary to their salvation." And again: "The purpose of election embraces foreordination to good works."*

Two or three texts from scripture will be quite sufficient to show that this view of the matter is correct: "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (II. Tim. i., 9.) "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephe. i., 4). "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (II. Thess. ii., 13.) The original Greek shows a still plainer aptitude of this last text to our purpose: *ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας*, which should be rendered, "*in sanctification of Spirit and belief of truth.*" For the words here are intended to express not *cause*, but, *effect*,—not so much the Holy Spirit's work as the human spirit's *state*.

*"Christian Doctrines," p. 111, 112.

Now, as we see from these texts—and many others might be cited to the same purpose—that God’s electing purposes are directly connected with the internal work, the “holy calling” of the Spirit, we may fairly suppose that, like the work of Christ, this peculiar work of the Holy Spirit, though decreed from before the foundation of the world, becomes manifest only in the times and states of each human being’s intellectual and moral responsibility. For in regard to the work of Christ himself, we are told he “verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” (I. Peter i., 20). And whenever and wherever this doctrine of election is mentioned in Scripture, unless we are greatly mistaken, it is always coupled with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Yet we must not transpose cause and effect in this case by making the election of God dependent on faith and good works, instead of holding faith and good works as the effects of election. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of His Son*,” (Rom. viii., 29.) The election is not because of holiness, but in order to holiness; still it is very clear that it pertains to such as are intellectually capable of receiving “*a holy*

calling," of exercising "*love,*" and experiencing "*sanctification of spirit and belief of truth.*" Faith, holiness, and good works are the legitimate fruits of election to eternal life in Christ ; but these all are impossible to infants. Hence their sphere of life must have its place outside the orbit in which the decree of election describes its course.

That God's decrees of reprobation do not touch irresponsible infants and idiots, is very distinctly declared by our Lord in his observations to some of the conceited and meddling Pharisees which is reported in John, ix., 41, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin." And he repeats the same in effect in John, xv., 22-24. Prof. Henry J. Ripley, in his note on this Gospel text, very aptly renders it thus: "*If ye were blind*,—if ye were really destitute of proper faculties and opportunities for obtaining knowledge, *ye should have no sin*' ; ye would be blameless." Now, infants and idiots have no such faculties and opportunities, and are therefore plainly pronounced by this Scripture—by this utterance of the Son of God himself—to have no sin. And having no sin, dying in a sinless state, they are by the authority of this Gospel eternally saved to God through Him who has made the ample and accepted atonement "for the sin of the whole world." (John i., 29 ; I. John ii., 2.)

Let it clearly and constantly be borne in mind that our Lord, in John iii : 5, speaks of the terms and conditions on which men may "*enter into the kingdom of God.*" But in Luke, xviii., 16, he asserts categorically that such little children "*are of the kingdom of God.*" Under the saving, vitalizing power of the cross of Christ, new-born babes, equally with repentant sinners, are by God's grace engrafted into the body of Christ, and gratuitously accounted righteous. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii., 24). For with respect to justification, faith is, in the adult capable of exercising it, a thing merely passive, bringing nothing of our own to conciliate the favor of God, but receiving what we need from Christ. God justifies all alike, the young and the old, the wise and the simple, when He reconciles us to Himself by not imputing our sins to us, whatever they may be in character or number, "Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (I. Cor. i., 30). That is, Christ is all-complete and, consequently, He is all that His creature needs throughout time and eternity; and His grace, in kind and quantity, in manner and form, is supplied as needed by His people from first to last. "For in

Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii., 9).

We are all in Him who created, and then, after the fall, redeemed us all. In Him only have we hope; and hope,—which devils have not,—we see is innate to every child that comes into the world. In Christ then, truly, we all "live and move and have our being," and in him we should all eternally live, because "he ever liveth," if we did not on attaining individual moral responsibility, choose to sin against him after the similitude of Adam's transgression, by willfully renouncing allegiance to God and refusing to obey his commandments. This we all do just as soon as we are able to do it. Therefore the Son of man came into this world "*to save that which was lost.*"

Having died away from God in trespasses and sins, the stalwart man no more than the feeble infant, has power to extricate himself from that Serbonian bog, that quagmire of eternal ever deepening death, whose foul and fathomless abyss underlies the gloomy grave. Rescue and salvation can come only from those puissant arms which have been mercifully extended to all from the Rock of Ages. Upon those blessed arms we have seen and contemplated, with glad and grateful hearts, little children resting in this world. And

then we have heard them singing welcomed hosannas to their Lord and Saviour, while he was engaged on earth in fulfilling the Divine Covenant of eternal redemption. Shall He not "see the travail of his soul and be satisfied?" Yea, verily: The Book says He "shall!" And the tiny tongues that cried in silvery notes, "Hosanna to the Son of David" in the Jewish temple, are most certainly chiming their appropriate part in that ceaseless, glorious diapason of praise that vibrates upon the welkin of the upper world. In the innumerable hosts "which were redeemed from the earth," the blooming child and the battle-scarred saint all sing together and forever "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

"The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy." (Amos iii. 8.)

CHAPTER VI.

RAYS OF LIGHT FROM THE APOCALYPSE.

“And the time came that the Saints possessed the kingdom.”—*Dan. vii.*, 22.

“And brighter than noon-day shall life arise; the darkness shall become as the morning.”—*Job xi.*, 17.

But for this last precious book of the sacred Canon, Christianity would have closed its own inspired record in deep gloom, if not despondent sorrow. Most, if not all of the Apostles except the writer of the Revelation, had already met a bloody fate at the hands of their fellow men, to save whose souls they had “loved not their lives unto death.” And he, the last survivor of “The Twelve,” was a suffering exile on the bare and rugged isle of Patmos. But the sufferings, death, and impending dangers to which individuals were subjected, formed but a part of the minatory terrors of those times. While there were fiery and cruel persecutions without, there were at the same time pestilent heresies and gross corruptions within the churches, if therefore, the Gospel revelation had closed

without this last grand book, with its warnings of great conflicts issuing in triumphal scenes, and pæans of victory, and mansions of rest, the church militant would have been set forth before the world like a widow in her weeds, or a young bride bowed with grief and lamenting, "like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth." But here, in the Apocalyptic panorama, we have a transporting epiphany of the All-glorious Bridegroom as He reveals himself in undying love to his suffering, disconsolate bride, and unrolls before her the ecstatic denotement of "things to come."

With all its profound and inexplicable mysteries, the book of Revelation with its glowing imagery, is, yet, redolent with the odors of Paradise, and flecked all over with roseate hues of Divine mercy and rich blessings. From its pages flow streams of celestial love and light, that illumine and cheer the whole pathway of God's people, as they journey on through grace to glory.

To this precious book, then, let us now go in search of still further light and cumulative evidence in regard to the eternal salvation of infants. We believe that the Lamb who lights up all heaven with His glory, has revealed the presence of infants there.

In our preceeding researches, we have

derived from the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament, striking proofs of the truth of infant salvation ; in the Apocalypse we shall find delineated bold pictures and bright tokens of the same truth.

When the "woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," (xii., 1-5), was about to give birth, "the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born ;" but "her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Now, without pretending to comprehend, or to interpret the meaning of this great mystery, it is quite sufficient for our purpose to call attention to the simple fact that a child,—a new-born infant,—is exhibited "in heaven." It answers all the purposes of our argument, and strengthens our faith in the salvation of infants, for us to find here that an inspired prophecy is given in the Bible, and a divine truth is taught to the world, by a symbolism that avers the presence of a new-born babe in heaven, and his being caught up to the very throne of God. It matters not at all if the whole thing here related is only a symbolic figure ; still, the verisimilitude of the figure, the analogy or resemblance of relations which it assumes in

the use made of it by the inspired writer, proves that heaven is not closed by its necessary laws against the presence and existence of an infant in its blessed realms. And that itself, being thus established, may tend to close the mouths of at least one class of gainsayers, and invite to further inquiry.

The fact, or figure, (take it as you may,) further shows very conclusively that the Spirit of the Revelation does not deem an infant a thing of indifference to God; for we are here told that the new-born babe was "caught up unto God, and to his throne." And if the new-born infant to which allusion is here made should be held to be a personification of every converted believer of the whole Christian Church; or of Constantine, the first Christian emperor; or of the papal Antichrist and usurper; or of any other creature; it would not impair the force of the argument. If the Lord Jesus himself be meant, then it would only be all the more decisive of the truth for which we contend, for we are elsewhere told by inspiration that "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto his brethren." (Heb. ii., 17.) We may further confirm this view of the special point under consideration, with a very just remark of Dr. David H. Lord in another connection, but equally applicable here: "If a

visible presence do not symbolize a visible presence, then an agent may not represent an agent, nor an agency an agency, and all possibility is at once extinguished of demonstrative interpretation.”*

But again. In the diverse and multitudinous† expositions that have been given by various learned expounders of the first five verses of the fourteenth chapter of this wonderful book, not one seems altogether so reasonable and satisfactory to our mind as that which would make the “hundred and forty-four thousand,” who are seen to stand on “the Mt. Sion” with the Lamb, refer to the redeemed souls of little children. Let us take the text before us:

“And I looked, and lo a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder : and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps : and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders : and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were

* Exp. of Apoc., p. 448, 1st edition.

† “Holden observes, ‘No two commentators agree in their interpretations ; every one forming in some respects a different hypothesis ; while no entire exposition has yet been offered in which the cool and cautious inquirer will altogether acquiesce.’” (Anno. Par. Bible : Art. Rev., p. 1442.) And the following is to the same effect : “There is no book in the New Testament upon which so many commentaries have been written, and about which there has been so great a diversity of opinion, as the Apocalypse or Revelation.” (Martin’s Orig. and Hist. of the N. T., 2d ed., p. 126.) And again : Every commentator has his own theory, and opens the prophecy with his own key. (Id., p. 129.)

redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women ; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Rev. xiv., 1-5.)

Now, observe that while the number 144,000, that are seen here "*with the LAMB,*" and are seen to "*follow him wherever he goes,*" is the same number as that presented in chapter vii., 3-4, they do not appear to be the same group, nor of synchronous representation. In that, they are particularly described as those sealed with the "seal of the living God," *on the earth, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel*, and are presented in contrast (v. 9) with "a great crowd, which no one could have numbered, out of every Nation, and of all Tribes, and Peoples, and Languages, standing before the Throne, and in the presence of the Lamb, invested with white Robes, and palm branches in their hands." But here (ch. xiv.), the 144,000 are described as being *with the Lamb* on the heavenly Mt. Sion.* They are not said to

* Whether the scene of this blissful picture is located in the celestial abodes, or pertains to the millennial reign of Christ on this earth, it must, we think, have reference to a purely spiritual state of existence. Against the view of a personal reign of Christ on the earth, which some have very lately revived, there is a remark of the eminent Andrew Fuller which strikes us with great force. He says: "The idea of a personal reign appears to me nearly to exclude that of a spiritual one, by leaving little or no place for it." (Works, vol. iii., p. 292.)

be of the Tribes of Israel (as in ch. vii.); and they seem, here, to be contrasted rather with the host of saints of whom it is said (v. 12), "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." The scene in ch. vii., therefore, would seem to be the representation of a state of things under the Old dispensation, while this (ch. xiv.) is under the New. For here, immediately after the vision of the 144,000 with the Lamb is presented, we are expressly told (v. 6), "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred and tongue and people. The 144,000 of the children of Israel, in chapter vii., were "sealed in their foreheads" as "servants of our God," but with what inscription we are not informed. Our 144,000 (ch. xiv.) are described as having "*the name of Him and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.*"* Upon the conquering martyrs mentioned in chapter iii., 12, the name of God and of the new Jerusalem is inscribed. These differences strike us as significant.

* We follow here the text of Griesbach, which we believe is supported in this instance by at least three out of the four older Codices: το ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένον ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

While, too, this vision of the 144,000 in chapter xiv. appears to be a symbolic fact contemporary with the Gospel dispensation, it seems to describe a certain class or company, discriminating them from those "that dwell on the earth," to whom "the everlasting gospel" is said to be *preached*. The first class are represented as safe and happy "with the Lamb on Mount Sion," while the latter are, at the same time, subjected to the probationary state of hearing the gospel preached "on the earth."

Furthermore, when we come to notice the several other descriptive facts mentioned in the text, of those that stood on Mount Sion with the Lamb and followed him "whithersoever he goeth," it does really appear to our mind that no exposition we have ever met with so fully fits the facts given, and preserves intact the whole contour of the picture,—its *tout ensemble*—as the hypothesis we suggest, viz. : that it is a graphic representation of the whole mighty host of incorrupt infants "redeemed unto God" by "the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world."

Observe : "No man could learn" the song that was then harped in heaven but "the hundred and forty-four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." They could

learn it: it was suited to their capacity. Such, and such only, could fully participate in the peculiar joys consequent upon a deliverance like theirs. Prof. Stuart remarks on the words "*A new song*," that those words, here as elsewhere, indicate a *new subject* or theme to which the song relates. And "*no one could learn the song*," i. e., no one who had not been thus redeemed could enter fully into the feelings and sympathies of those who had" * been *thus* redeemed.

Again: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins." † Then their being distinguished among the heavenly hosts as "*they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*," would seem to designate in a most appropriate and natural way, the dependent, clinging, foot-following, fond and loving disposition of little children. They are not only represented as

* Stuart on the Apocalypse, vol. II., p. 292.

† This sentence, we are aware, is held to be spurious by some learned critics, but the Revised version of the American Bible Union retains it even without brackets. If spurious, it would then at least go to show that the interpolator, whoever he was, must have entertained our views in regard to the general sense of the text. The assumption of almost all commentators, that this descriptive sentence, if genuine, has reference to such as have not polluted themselves with the worship of idols, is far-fetched and without a tittle of evidence to support it. For whenever the writers of the Old Testament, or of the New, make allusion to that kind of unfaithfulness to God, they characterize it metaphorically with that peculiarly opprobrious appellation which, in its literal sense has reference to the vilest lewdness. And in no part of the Bible does that particular word more frequently occur than in this very book. It is therefore unwarrantable to suppose the usual phraseology would be dropped or softened into any circumlocution, in this particular place, if the allusion really was to the spiritual prostitution of idol worship.

redeemed *from* the earth, but furthermore : "These were redeemed *from among men*, — the first fruits unto God and the Lamb." The first fruits of what ? Why, of that whole ransomed harvest of humanity which had all fallen down and "died in Adam," under the blasting breath of sin ; but had been lifted up and "made alive in Christ."

In the mouth of these, here described, there "was found no guile : for they are without fault before the throne of God." All, most truly, who ever appear before that Throne in peace, will have to be clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness, and have their guile, and faults, and multiform sins all blotted out in the blood of the Lamb. But is there not some pith in the point, some significant and peculiar weight in the words which here describe a given class or number of souls as without "guile" or "fault" before the throne of God ? Is it not most probably meant as a signalizing feature of those who appear before God's throne, freed from the ban of original sin, their ever-blessed souls presenting, as it were, a *tabula rasa* on which to receive the first conscious impress of God's infinite love ? There is, in the supposition, nothing whatever to lessen or disparage the good fortune of those who appear there, "as unprofitable servants," after hav-

ing fought "the good fight of faith" and "passed through much tribulation." God discriminated, as we know, between David and Solomon. The warrior whose hands had been stained in blood, though "a man after God's own heart," was not allowed to build the Temple. That peculiar service and honor was assigned to the man of peace. Why may there not be in heaven, likewise, distinction based on some similar principle? The Lord Jesus himself informs us that "the children of the resurrection, being the children of God," shall all be "as the angels which are in heaven." (Luke xx., 36; Mark xii., 25.) But we read in Scripture of the "archangel," of "strong angels," of "mighty angels," of "angels of great power," and of "angels that excel in strength," which all implies that there are among them distinct orders and differences of capacity and employment.

And now we think it must be allowed that there is at least as much plausibility in the gloss we have given to this passage of Scripture which we have been considering, as in any exposition of it that has heretofore been given, whether Historical, Præterist, or Futurist.* And while ours is not less consist-

* "The most numerous class is that of the *historical or continuous* expositors, who regard the Revelation as a progressive history of the

ent with the spirit and drift of revealed truth, it is certainly far more pleasing and comforting than any other interpretation.

We next pass to the awful scene depicted in Rev. vi., 12-17. Let us again take the whole passage before us :

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind, And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man,* hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

We have italicized that portion of the text to which we particularly desire to direct attention. It will there be seen that while the inspired seer, with evident pains and minute particularity, enumerates every class, condition and character of the wretched lost inhabitants of earth, who will then seek to conceal themselves, and will invoke the moun-

Church from the first century to the end of time. The second embraces the *praterist* expositors, who are of opinion that it has been almost, if not altogether fulfilled already. The third consists of the *futurist* expositors, who believe that the whole book, with the exception of two or three chapters, refers to events which are yet to come."—*Martin*, p. 130.

tains and rocks to fall on them and hide them "from him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb," *he makes no mention of infants or little children as forming any part of that miserable company.* Now this is the more remarkable and significant from the well-known fact, that in so very many instances recorded in Scripture, when God's wrath and severest temporal destruction is denounced against peoples and cities of the earth, the extent and thoroughness of their destruction is revealed and most terrifically declared by the express mention and especial inclusion of their *little ones* and their *sucklings* in those fearful denunciations. See Num. xxi., 35; Deu. xxxii., 25; Josh. vi., 21; Isa. xiii., 18; Jer. xvi., 6; Eze. ix., 6; Hose. xiii., 16; ix., 12; Nahum iii., 10; Zeph. i., 8; Zech. xiii., 7.

In the text before us, the rapt seer is presenting to us a soul-harrowing picture of the state of things that must come to pass when He who made heaven and earth shall declare "that there shall be time no longer," "For the great day of his wrath is come;" and in this appalling scene of the death-doomed sons of earth, *there is no trace of any little child.* Let us lay the comfort to our hearts, and bless God for his saving mercy through Jesus Christ, our Lord! "My lips shall

utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes."

In the next succeeding chapter we are presented with another picture, and a roll or inventory is there given us of a kind which, from its very structure and phraseology, seems as evidently designed to be comprehensive and inclusive in its sweep, as the last above noticed was exclusive and particular in its structure and purview.

"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." (Rev. vii., 9, 10.)

Now it must be allowed that those constituting this great concourse that come into heaven from all the *idolatrous, pagan "nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues"* of the world, are certainly much more apt to be their irresponsible little children who die in that state, than those of them who, "When they knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankful;" "and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." (Rom. i., 21, 23.)

* "For as many as have sinned without law

shall also perish without law." (Rom. ii., 12.) There, in that great, innumerable, happy concourse of saints, by grace redeemed, God has, doubtless, in heaven as on earth, "perfected his praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings." And the sweet notes of Alleluias that ring out from their ransomed spirits; as they fly and hover around The Great White Throne, are heard even amid the songs of the Seraphim and the shouts of Cherubim, saying, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

It would be as impossible to exclude the little children who depart this world in their natural state of innocency, from that "great multitude" here exhibited as worshipping "before the throne, and before the Lamb," as it would have been to keep back those brought to Christ on earth, after he had said "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not." He who thus acted on earth presides in heaven, and he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." To the whole created universe "he spake, and it was, he commanded, and it stood fast."

"And the empyrean rung with Hallelujahs."

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,” and God says, “when I see the blood I will pass over you.” And this must stand good for every one until each, of his own individual wickedness, has willfully “trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” (Heb. x., 29.) Little infants do not this vile rebellious thing. God therefore saves them all. “Therefore rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them.”

Lay these things together in your bereaved hearts, ye weeping mothers who have laid your little loved ones to rest in the bosom of the mother earth, and be sure the Lamb of God holds them all safely in the hollow of his mighty hand. He created them for his own glory, and has crowned them all with joys eternal and divine. Humble yourselves like the little child to the guiding hand of Jesus, and his good Spirit will lead you too, all in due time, into the eternal and ineffable joys of the upper and better world, where there remains forever “a rest to the people of God.” “Earth has no sorrow, that heaven cannot cure.”

God says to his people: “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort

you." And again : " Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

" For He woundeth, and bindeth up, He smiteth, and his hands make whole."

" I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the comfort of my lips should uphold." (Job, xvi., 5.)

" Weep not; the child is not dead, but sleepeth." (Luke, viii., 52.)

INFANT SALVATION

ACCORDING

TO THE BIBLE.



PART II.



INFANT SALVATION

According to the Bible

PART II—CHAPTER I

ORIGINAL SIN.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”—*John iii.*, 6.

The foregoing part of this work proceeds on that method of reasoning which, beginning with the observation of effects, aims at reaching their true causes. This form of argumentation is necessarily more or less tentative and inconclusive. By it we cannot always arrive at satisfactory conclusions. Our inductions, however wide may be the field of observed facts, have often to be modified by further investigation and a more comprehensive range of information. It is therefore always well, when practicable, to reverse the order of reasoning, and test the reliability of our conclusions by that more strictly demonstrative process which descends, by analytical steps, from principles to their necessary conclusions. This is the deductive process.

The *inductive* simply tends to focalize diversified truth, the *deductive* tracks truth in its radiations for the purpose of observing, measuring, and comparing variety of effects in their unity of character. The one synthetic, the other analytical. Their respective trustworthiness, and the consequent choice between them, where choice may be made, depends on the nature and conditions of the subject matter to be investigated. Where both processes can be applied, it is safest and most satisfactory to employ both. Having applied the first, we shall now pursue the second method in our further investigation of the subject of infant salvation.

Our restricted limits will necessarily compel us to condense to a degree of brevity that must often, we fear, leave our thought imperfectly expressed. At the most we can only hope to blaze, as a pioneer, a very narrow pathway into the deep forest of this subject, which better trained and more skillful hands will in time, we trust, work out into a highway of broad recognized truth.

In this part of our treatise, as in the foregoing, we propose to take the Bible reverently along with us for our chart and compass, as we cautiously thread our way through the dense fog of fictions and follies,

which human systems of theology have collected about the headlands of revealed truth. We have not time or space to engage directly in combating spurious ideas and theories, with which the sacred record has been overlaid and obscured. But if we can only elevate by ever so little the light of truth, we shall thereby proportionally disperse the darkness of error.

The first matter that would seem to require discussion in this part of our work is that of "original sin," or natural depravity and human guilt.

We are quite willing to accept the orthodox view in regard to that moral corruption which we see is common to all men from birth, and allow that it springs out of the innate proneness of the human will to evil. We have no need to trouble ourselves here with the nice distinctions and metaphysical speculations of theologians respecting the matter. The Scriptures clearly connect Adam's posterity with him in a way that concludes us all, in a state of nature, offensive to God and obnoxious to his awful displeasure. 1 Cor. xv., 22, 45, 46, 49; Rom. v., 12, ff. "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

The Bible informs us that the first pair of human beings, knowingly and willfully chose

to renounce their dutiful allegiance and happy subjection to their Creator, by an act of disobedience to his express and well-known command; and that they thereby forfeited and lost the high spiritual power of righteous self-control. Their divine subjective power, or faculty of God-consciousness, which should ever have led and ruled their whole being, had, as it were, tumbled down from the exalted pedestal of authoritative dominion on which it had been placed by the Creator, and became subservient to the baser powers of their mere "earthly" nature. The philosophical truth here involved is admirably expressed by Dr. Conant in his comment on Gen. ii., 17, when he says, "The principle of conscious obedience to the divine will is the first step in moral progress, and the essential element of true happiness." Am. B. U. Gen. *in loco*.

Man, in the hour of his creation, was "fearfully and wonderfully made"; so that his nature probably beyond that of angels, was capable of receiving the vast and inestimable treasures of Infinite Love. And there is no evidence that the fallen human nature became at once so utterly depraved that the serpent and the man, as in Dante's *Inferno*, grew together "each melted into other"; but the whole moral nature of the rebellious

creature fell into ruinous and helpless disorder. This we easily discern from the existing state of the wreck,—from the confused, disordered and heterogeneous intermingling of good and bad in man's moral constitution. We see the higher intellective and more ennobling faculties displaced from their proper relative position, and appetite, passion, and vitiated will domineering over reason and stifling conscience. Thus man, made in the glorious image of his Maker, with his head right up and his heart right true, is fallen and lies prone and prostrate in his native dust, the victim and slave of his sin perverted powers. "The soul all mournfully sat down among its senses," and there brooded over the horrible element of death as it worked its diabolical will in the inner sanctuary of the spirit.

This abnormal and wretched condition into which man fell, in consequence of his disobedience to the command of his Creator, became his fixed constitutional state. And being constitutionally such, he could propagate no other kind of nature. He necessarily "begot in his own likeness, after his image." Gen. v., 3. His offspring must of necessity partake of the organic nature, both material and immaterial, from which they derive their being. In a legitimate natural way they

could not possibly get any other. And this philosophical and obvious principle of generation, cuts up the heresy of Pelagianism by its roots. The work of creation was finished : God had rested from it. The whole progeny of Adam has therefore come into being conditioned unto death.

We know of no better definition of what is termed "original sin" than that given by John Calvin. "Original sin," says he, "appears to be an hereditary pravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul, rendering us obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scriptures call 'works of the flesh.'"* And the same great theologian again expresses but the truth, as the Scriptures appear to reveal it, when he says, "No other explanation can be given of our being said to be dead in Adam, than that his transgression not only procured misery and ruin for himself, but also precipitated our nature into similar destruction. And that not by his personal guilt as an individual, which pertains not to us, but because he infected all his descendants with the corruption into which he had fallen. Otherwise there would be no truth in the assertion of Paul, that 'all are by nature children of

* Institutes, vol. 1, p. 229.

wrath.' (Ephes. ii., 3.) Adam, therefore, corrupted himself in such manner, that the contagion has been communicated from him to all his offspring." *

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job xiv : 4.) All are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. (Ps. li., 5.) But, nevertheless, there is an innate dim light in every man, discovering to him the right lines of duty in the common notions of good and evil. For so the apostle accounts it of the Gentiles, "which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." (Rom. ii., 15.)

Sin is a state of absenteeism from God, and therefore a condition of spiritual darkness and moral death : because "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John, i., 5.) Sin is not itself a creature or being, but simply criminal alienation from the Father of Lights, and the consequent privation of holiness. Just as darkness is the absence of light, and cold the absence of heat. It is vastly important to the end of practical personal piety and holiness of life, that this truth be constantly borne in mind. "If we

* Id., p. 23.

walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with each other."

We accept, then, as substantially true and well-founded, the old orthodox theory that Adam was, in every sense, the head of his race. He was its natural head, since all human beings are, by course of nature, descended from him: its moral head, since the sinful disposition to disobey God and resist His holy will, which all have by nature, is but the counterpart and concomitant of that corrupted disposition which is transmitted from father to son. And in some sense,—(not very easy to define),—its representative or federal head, since through him the Divine condemnation is incurred, and has fallen upon all his demoralized race. Yet, in all this, there is no more foundation in the Scripture narrative of the fall, than there is in reason for the far-fetched absurd idea of any compact or covenant of works on the part of Adam.

God's displeasure is not visited on the children of men as penalty for the sin of Adam; but simply and obviously because all, on coming to the age of moral responsibility, forthwith repeat acts of disobedience to God's righteous laws, "after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Condemnation necessarily follows alienation of heart from God.

We must not, however, suppose that God directly inflicts depravity as penalty for human sin, because that would be making God a sinner, since depravity is sin, and the making of one depraved is the doing of sin. Human *depravity* is only the necessary and unavoidable result of that sin which the head of the race, and every individual member of the race in the original head man, committed in rebellion against God. Human *guilt* is but the consequence of willful human sin. Sin and death began with the first pair, and from them have passed into all men. (Gen. v., 3; John iii., 6; Rom. v., 12; Ephe. ii., 3).

So equally in every sense, according to the Scriptures, Christ Jesus, the second Adam, became the supernatural and concentric head of his people (1 Cor. xv., 46). In him, however, the order of the genesis is reversed. First the spiritual begetting (Rom. v., 10; vi. 22; 1 Cor. iv., 15; 1 Pet. i., 3-5; 1 John, v. 18); then follow fruits of the Spirit betokening new moral character (Gal. v., 22; Ephe., v. 9); and lastly comes the resurrection of our bodies "fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii., 21)

Therefore, Jesus Christ the Righteous, the Maker of us and of all things, "is the

propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii., 2.) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i., 29.) He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. iv., 8.) "Yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among men." (Ps. lxxviii., 18.)

With these clear, unqualified and explicit texts of Scripture before us, and very many other passages to the same effect that might be readily quoted, we hold the doctrine of the *innocency* of infants and the consequent eternal salvation of all of them who die in that state, notwithstanding their innate natural depravity. For this unholy infection of nature remains even in the regenerate adult, as the apostle Paul so graphically and dramatically depicts it in the 7th chapter of Romans.

The fall is a sorrowful certainty that encompasses every child of man from the hour of its birth. But a power to choose the right and reject the evil must become developed before man becomes a moral agent at all. Such a thing as physical fatality would, of course, destroy the foundations of all moral government. Those for whom Christ died are saved until they renounce

the salvation—until they disbelieve. “Every child,” says Birks, “by virtue of his birth into the world, becomes also one of the seed of the woman, and thereby is brought within the scope of a gracious economy of redeeming love.* Born, through the atoning mercy of Christ, into a state of peace with God—a moral and spiritual Eden—every one remains securely there until he voluntarily abjures the authority of God, and hearkens unto the voice of the Tempter. Then also is his earthly Eden forfeited and lost. The conscious knowledge of good and evil comes to every man, as it came to Adam, by refusing obedience to the Divine will, and thereby violating the essential principle of moral progress and happiness. “For we find,” says Bp. Butler, “that happiness and misery are not our *fate* in any such sense as not to be the consequences of our behavior, but that they are the consequences of it.”†

It is abundantly revealed that children, for some time after their birth, have no such knowledge of good and evil as originates moral responsibility. Of the Jews in the wilderness it was said: “Your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowl-

* Difficulties of Belief, p. 157.

† Butler's Analogy, p. 164. Malcolm's 17th Edn.

edge between good and evil, they shall go in thither." (Deu. i., 39.) The Apostle remarks of Jacob and Esau, while unborn, as a self-evident fact, that they had done nothing either good or evil. And it was expressly assigned as one of the reasons why Nineveh was spared on the occasion of Jonah's visit, that there were in it "more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand." Therefore God would "have mercy upon whom he would have mercy." "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James iv., 17.) This Scripture excludes sin on the one side, and on the other defines what it is.

It is not the *liability* to transgress, but *actual transgression* which calls for condign punishment; not even the *moral certainty* of going astray, but *actual deviation from the right path*, which justifies chastisement. Therefore it is written, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and each shall be "judged according to the deeds done in the body." This, of course, includes deeds of omission as well as deeds of commission, thoughts as well as actions. (Matt. v., 28; 1 John iii., 15.) How can infants, then, that die before they have done either good or evil, before they have either done or

failed to do anything, suffer under this righteous law upon which Christ has settled the whole fallen race of man? It is simply impossible.

No allusion to the sin of Adam, either as the sole or even a concurrent cause of any soul's condemnation, is to be found in any Scripture revelation touching the final judgment. The second death or sentence of final judgment on the ungodly, is invariably referred to their own personal guilt. The eternal punishment due to the unrighteousness and taint of original sin must, therefore, have been expiated and effectually canceled. And this was evidently done by Him who in mercy visited and spoke words of comfort and hope, to the fallen pair, even before their expulsion from the precincts of desecrated Eden. Adam and Eve, realizing their helpless, lost condition, must then have come to understand that he who clothed them and gave them a precious promise and sustaining hope, was "indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world. (John iv., 42.) And so believing his word of promise, they learned to "trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." (1 Tim. iv., 10.)

We read in Exo. xxxii., 33: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out

of my book." And in Rev. iii., 5, we read again, "he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Here is certainly a very clear intimation that names are upon the book of life that may be blotted out. The names of those who "overcome" are not blotted out, but remain there eternally. The inference, then, seems very fair and very strong, that when Christ *overcame* all names were entered in the book of life. The name must be there, evidently, before it could ever be blotted out, and the condition on which it is to remain shows that it was not originally entered there for anything done by the person owning the name. With the work of keeping it there, he just as evidently has something to do—he has to "overcome;" and the very character and finality of that work on his part, shows that he could not possibly have performed any work for which his name was at the first entered in the book of life. That, then, must have been the work of Christ; and the pronoun "he," in this place, stands obviously as the synonym of every name in the whole human race. We may feel sure, then, that every name has been entered in the book of life by virtue of Christ's

Atonement; but those upon whom responsibility falls that remain there, and through divine grace, finally "overcome" and gain "a crown of life," are such as shall be "kept by the power of God through faith," unto the second coming of the Lord Jesus to judge the world in righteousness.

We have thus indicated the grounds on which we cherish the hope, and maintain the doctrine of the salvation of infants. We rest it simply and alone on the merits and power of the atonement made for "the sin of the world." And in reference to this ground of hope, Calvin well remarks: "The kingdom of heaven is not the stipend of servants, but the inheritance of children."* "And the Lord," says Augustine, "has made himself our debtor, not by receiving anything from us, but by promising all things to us." Though "sold under sin," infants together with all others have been "bought with a price," even with the precious blood of the Son of God, "who loved us and gave himself for us." "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." That "Greater

* Institutes, Vol. II., p. 52.

One" has said to all the world, I am the resurrection and the life."

"He came to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found."

But unhappily for all concerned, the Christian world is not allowed, unmolested by theological caveats and cavils, to cherish even this sweet hope of a full and complete atonement for all. We must therefore go now into at least a brief examination of the nature, purpose and extent of the Atonement, as a necessary adjunct to the completeness of our thesis. We propose to show from the Gospel, and that without contravening any one of its other doctrines, that we but utter the strictly literal truth when we sing in the worship of Jesus Christ:

"Wide as the reach of Satan's rage
Doth thy salvation flow;
'Tis not confined to sex or age,
The lofty or the low.

CHAPTER II.

THE ATONEMENT: ITS UNIVERSAL ASPECT.

"And He is before all things, and by him all things consist."—*Col. i.*, 17.

The more one acquaints himself with the voluminous mass of what has been written and published on the subject of the Atonement, the more inclined will he be to agree with Dr. J. M. Pendleton in the following remarks, which occur in the preface to his valuable little work on this subject: Says Dr. P., "The prominent theories of the Atonement contain much truth, but some error. The truth should be carefully extracted from them all. Could this be done, the *eclectic* process would accomplish much for the science of Theology. And I venture to say, that if God in his providence shall raise up a man to write a more satisfactory book on Atonement than we now have, that man will engage earnestly in the *eclectic* operation referred to."

Views of the nature and extent of the Atonement have very generally been shaped

and colored by preconceptions of the doctrines of predestination and election. This method of dealing with the subject appears to us unphilosophical and erroneous. The gospel revelation not having been given to the world in systematic philosophical form, whenever we undertake to formulate its teachings into a methodical system, it is obviously proper and necessary to the ends of truth, that we set up as corner posts and mainstays in the framework of such systematic structure, those fundamental doctrines which we find most distinctly and emphatically enunciated in Scripture. When this has been done wisely and well, we shall encounter the less trouble and the less risk of falling into error when we come to adjust the secondary and subordinate parts of our theological building. If this is the correct and just principle that should obtain in such work, then, unquestionably, the doctrine of the Atonement must take "the head of the corner," and election, predestination, etc., must be squared to that chief corner principle and fundamental doctrine.

The Scripture terms in which the nature, purpose, and extent of the Atonement are expressed, are strikingly broad and comprehensive. They treat, too, of an eternally accomplished fact which to us has become

historical. They plant the cross of Christ, and poise upon it the whole universe of God. Infinite Love erected that cross, and Infinite Justice delivered into the hands of Him who sanctified it "all power in heaven and on earth." Therefore, all truth, revealed and unrevealed, is thereupon dependent. We, with our puny finite minds and slow, blind hearts, may not indeed be able to see just how and where any given doctrine of revelation is, by the Divine hand, attached to the cross. But we, assuredly, are not at liberty to hue and chip, and chisel away the least portion or particle of the cross, in order to arrange and fit about it our own systematised theories. IT must stand intact, while we study to group around it and upon it, as best we may, the whole volume of gospel doctrines of which it forms the grand central figure and vitalizing principle.

"All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

The Apostle does not speak of "Christ crucified" as *a* power of God, and *a* wisdom of God, but as *the* power and *the* wisdom of God. And he certainly does not mean to declare that the appreciation of the "called" is the thing that makes the cross of Christ "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Christ crucified is intrinsically "the

power of God and the wisdom of God," whether men see it so or not. And by that almighty instrumentality of His infinite wisdom and power, God sees fit to work out and consummate all His sovereign decrees. To the chosen, grace is given to see this fact and to profit by it, while all not called and chosen remain and perish in ignorance of the fact, though it stares them in the face, mirrored in divine providences and in the whole face of nature, as well as upon the pages of the inspired Book. By the cross of Christ, God exerts His mastery and dominion over the devil and hell, as also by it He redeems the souls of men, and by it makes all things consist. (Col. i., 19, 20; Ephe. i., 9, 10.) Then, only from the mount of Atonement, which eternally stands pillowed up against the arch of "the third heaven," and from the glorified cross which crowns its topmost summit, can we hope to survey aright the whole outlying field of theology, or obtain correct views and a fair understanding of any one of its numerous dependencies.

Those writers who restrict the redeeming power of the Atonement to a limited number of human souls, do really, as their opponents charge, seem to reduce the matter to a kind of commercial transaction between the Almighty Father and Son. While the

advocates of unrestricted, universal Atonement, do equally, as it seems to us, belittle and degrade the nature of this mighty and marvelous mystery of Divine power and beneficence, by viewing and treating it too exclusively in the aspect which it presents with man simply for its subject. Hence we find them speaking of it as “a provision introduced into the administration of the Divine government”; as “an expedient” to which the Deity had to resort in order to restore integrity to his disrupted government, and as a sort of contingent arrangement for saving souls. Thus presenting this all-glorious, all-comprehending act of the Omniscient as an after-thought ! just as one might speak of a clever stroke of policy,—a *coup d'état* in human government,—as being the best thing that could be done—“under the circumstances of the case.” Now any such view of the matter is manifestly derogatory to the omniscience, sovereignty and independence of God, since it represents him as deriving the motives of his acts from the exigencies of his creation, and not from the inherent principles of his own unchangeable and eternal nature and purpose.

“It is idle,” well says Dr. Pendleton, “to talk of what the Atonement can do for man unless it does something for the government

of God." And again he says: "To say that no influences emanate from the cross Godward, is equivalent to a denial of all expiatory value in the sufferings of Christ." (ATONEMENT, pp. 47, 48.) And McCosh, in his very able treatise on THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT (p. 474), has this paragraph in point: "First, there must be a provision for vindicating the Divine Government, dishonored by the rebellion of the creature, and this in accordance with the character of God. Then, secondly, there must be a provision for rectifying the heart and nature of man. The first of these is found in the righteousness and sufferings of the Mediator, as giving glory to God, and effecting a reconciliation; and the second is provided in the inward operation of the Sanctifier. In the one, God's government is justified; and by the other man's character is sanctified."

The large and vigorous mind of Lord Bacon, with its characteristic vivacity and power, grasped this mighty subject most worthily. The Atonement, he says, was ordained and arranged, in all its nature, parts and relations, by God, "with respect to the Mediator, which is the great mystery and perfect centre of all God's ways with his creatures, and to which all his other works and wonders do but serve and refer." (Works, Vol. iv., p. 413.)

In the ordinary discussions of this subject, it seems often to be forgotten that the Saviour is also the Maker of man. Only He who became responsible to the majesty and integrity of his own government, for the making of such a weak and fallible creature as man, could properly or possibly atone for man's unlawful acts. But glory to the Divine government, to himself, and to the dependent, fallible creature, was the design of such a creation, and gloriously has Christ triumphed in the accomplishment of his purposes. Does not Jesus himself say as much with respect to the necessity and the purpose of his Atonement, in the reply which he made to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus? "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"* In this way, the terrible enemy of God and man was most signally rebuked and defeated. While the earthly Eden became forfeited, a highway was laid open for the poor fallen creature to the eternal Paradise of God. And a principle of Divine administrative power was inaugurated, the wisdom and beneficence of which will ultimately be vindicated in—

* The work of Dr. G. W. Samson on *THE ATONEMENT* has just come to our hand, as we are about to put this little volume to press. We are highly gratified to find that in his theory of the "*Assumed Divine Responsibility*," he has substantially taken the ground and ably presented the view we express above. More than three years ago we had formed this theory of the Atonement, and had, in our brief and feeble way, recorded it in our manuscript of this volume.

"The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways removing."

By the Divine Word all things were created. (John i., 1-3.) The creation of Lucifer, son of the morning, involved the sacrifice of Christ. The dread "father of lies" being the Prince of this world, it follows that the Atonement to be effected by the Second Person of the Trinity, was part and parcel of his purpose to create man. For sin cannot exist with impunity in God's universe. And by his cross Christ only could "judge" and "cast out" "the prince of this world." (John xii., 31 ; xvi., 11 ; Rom. viii., 3.)

The Atonement completely vindicates the Divine government from all complicity with sin or depravity of any kind, and lays the solid, enduring, and most efficient foundation for rectifying the ravages of sin, not only in the mind and heart of man, but in the whole universe of God. Thereby God magnifies and makes honorable his law, while he executes his purpose of creating responsible moral beings in His own glorious image to people this earth, where "the prince of the power of the air" had free access, and would, through his triumph over man, acquire and hold direful sway until the Son of Man should come the second time to judgment. But no longer ; for Satan, too, will then be judged,

and bound, "and cast into the bottomless pit." While to God and his people will remain a whole eternity of glory.

The human mind cannot solve the deep, dark problem of sin and its existence in God's universe; but we learn from the Scriptures that it existed before man, and God, of course, knowing its existence, created in the face of it. Man was to fall under the malign power of Satan, and some portion of mankind would for ever be consigned to "the place prepared for the devil and his angels." But they should choose that portion for themselves with as perfect free will as Satan chose it for himself. Yet, it is simply impossible that with the Omniscient, causes, immediate or remote, pertaining to the events even in the history and personal conduct of volitional free agents, can be any more contingent, or unknown, or problematical, than the events themselves. The temptation by Satan, and the sin and fall of man, could not therefore disturb for a moment, or alter in the slightest degree, God's predestinated plans and purposes. He is always, at all times, and everywhere, master of the situation. He orders all persons and things "according to the good pleasure of his will." And yet, by the very fiat of God, man is made free to choose his own eternal fate. Freedom of will is unques-

are the same as those of our globe and our own animal frame. The discoveries of the spectroscope explain the composition of the stars, and by the spectrum analysis, the vapors and metals of our earth are, astronomers tell us, found in the aurora and in the nucleus of a comet. In the remotest double star which the telescope can divide, the astronomers also profess to see working the same forces which govern the revolutions of the planets of our own solar system.

While "one star differeth from another star in glory," it is then, only in glory, not in material composition or motive forces. And likewise, while "all flesh is not the same flesh," the difference is in quality and not in substance. We have good reason, therefore, to believe that the whole planetary universe and all material inhabitants thereof, are formed of the same or very similar elements, only combined in different forms and proportions, suitable for adapting every one to its peculiar use and relative position in the universal cosmos.

Now Christ, the mighty Maker, took, "in the fullness of time," this same dust or material nature upon himself, thus connecting the material creation with the creative Spiritual in one bond of real, though mysterious union. When God and man were thus

united in Christ, the mystic circlet that embraces all things was not only completed, but clasped together and sealed with the imperishable signet-mark of the Omnipotent. In that nature Christ made a sin offering of himself and thereby "condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii., 3.)* By which offering He also sanctified and glorified, in his own divine person, all his material works. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of time God might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." (Ephe. i., 10.)

The Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection of the bodies of men and their ultimate reunion, in some form, with their spirits, also strongly supports this view of God's intimate personal relationship to his created universe, and his purpose finally of circling it to himself, all purified by the blood of Jesus, "that God may be all in all." (1 Cor., xv., 28.)

Archbishop Whately is clearly correct in saying that, "To have ascertained, and to perceive *a* reason for any thing that God has done, is far different from perceiving *the* reason; though the two are often confounded."

*Comp. Hodge on Rom., pp. 315-316. And Butler's Analogy, Ch. V., Sec. VII.

And when he shows, as we think he has satisfactorily done, "that the divine 'Word was made flesh,' to lead us to affectionate piety; and 'the manhood was taken into God,' to teach us God-like virtue," we are enabled to discover something, not only of the peculiar *mode*, but something also of the peculiar *means* by which God reaches and impresses himself on man and on all other matter. And still, it is most true, that "there may be yet other, and even greater objects effected by it, of which, for the present at least, we must remain ignorant."*

It is certain, however, that God has never severed himself wholly from his physical any more than from his spiritual and moral creations. "In a sense as true as it is grand, the soul of the Creator is streaming through the order and life of creation, but meanwhile he exists independent of, and far above them."† While we would eschew with horror every form and shade of pantheism, and maintain with the utmost reverence the supreme personality of the ever glorious Triune God; we must understand the various passages of Scripture above referred to, and other similar portions of Holy Writ, as revealing the fact that God purposes, "in the

* Whately on the Declaration of God in his Son." Sixth Ed. London, 1850, p. 102.

† McCosh, Div. Gov., p. 459.

fullness of time," to "gather together in one all things in Christ," in some closer and more intimate relationship than now obtains. And the Atonement made by the Divinely anointed Son of Man, must be the basis, and life-giving, and mighty magnetic principle and power on which this gathering together of all things is to progress to complete consummation. For we are told that by this means, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. viii., 21.)

The same thought is eloquently expressed by Archbishop Trench in the following words: "Thus, during all those hours that the Son of God hung upon the cross, there was darkness over the whole earth; nature shuddered to her very centre, at the moment when he expired; for it was *her* King, as well as man's, that died. And not otherwise we conclude that the coming of the Son of Man to judgment will be coincident and connected with a great organic transformation of this natural world on which we live. Its hidden fires shall break forth; it shall be no longer a fit dwelling place for man as he now is: the natural and the spiritual *Æon* shall have come simultaneously to their close."*

* Star of The Wise Men, pp. 23-24.

The spiritual, in those creatures of God made after His own image, is the connecting link, the nexus between the Divine and the natural. It elevates the latter by reflecting and portraying the former. Instinctively conscious of its constitutional alliance to both, it clings to both; but not with equal tenacity after sin enters the soul. The disastrous moral effects of the primal fall in the case of man, is here manifested in the deplorable fact that his soul is so far less in sympathy with the divine, than with the natural and material. Nevertheless, from the first entrance of sin into the complex nature of man, it encountered stern rebuke and strong resistance in the sanatory, life-giving power of the cross of Christ. For while that Cross at once threw upon the Serpent Tempter a dark shadow of inexorable doom, it presented at the same time a bright side of mercy and precious promise towards fallen humanity.

———“Had God foredoomed despair,
He had not spoken hope. He may destroy
Certes, but not deceive.” *Mrs. Browning*

CHAPTER III.

THE ATONEMENT IN ITS RELATIONS TO MAN.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."—*John i., 4.*

Having glanced at the Atonement of Christ in its Universal aspects and connections, let us now proceed to consider it in its more particular relations towards humanity.

It may aid us in our efforts to arrive at right views in regard to this momentous subject, if we here bestow a little attention on its Biblical nomenclature and theological terminology. We shall see that all the words and terms used by the sacred writers and others, touching the Atonement, are highly figurative. This results from the necessity of the case—from the supernatural and mysterious nature of the subject. Heavenly things cannot be literally or adequately expressed in human language. The human mind can only grasp them in part, and that in faint, shadowy form. And there is no subject of the Divine revelation, in dealing with which, human language has so mani-

festly struggled with its own impotency, as The Atonement. Very meagre and partial indeed, has been the success of the most strenuous efforts in this case ; as I think we shall all agree, after examination of the matter. Yet it will be profitable to do so, for the very reason that the failure and inadequacy of language to express and describe the superlatively grand and glorious—the inexpressible thing, will tend to enlarge, elevate, and spiritualize our ideas and conceptions of its nature and power.

The vernacular Anglo-Saxon words at-one-ment, became by pronunciation euphoniously blended together in the word *Atonement*. Its literal signification conveys the idea, then, in its application to this sacred subject, of Christ's work restoring peace and harmony between the Creator and creature after sin had intervened.

The word *atonement* occurs only once in our common English New Testament (Rom. v., 11.), and the revised version of the American Bible Union has very properly corrected it there, and rendered the Greek *καταλλαγην*, *reconciliation*, as it is uniformly translated in all other places where it occurs. The word is, however, found several times in our Old Testament, but always in such connection as shows its signification to be that which

the English language would now render by the more exact term, *expiation*: annulling of guilt, cancelling a debt or penalty by some form of substitution. See Lev. xvi., 11; Num. xvi., 46, 47.

The Hebrew Scriptures use the word כִּפָּה—*kopher*, a cover, and its verbal root to cover. This is the characteristic appellation of the doctrine. The term is applied in some places to the Mercy-Seat, the lid or covering of the Ark of the Covenant. The word, therefore, when applied to the work or person of Christ, conveys to the mind the sweet and beautiful conception of Christ, by his interposition, covering the exposed and defenceless head of poor fallen man from the just indignation of offended Deity.

The Hebrew קָדַם—*peduth*, and the Greek *apolutrosis*, both mean *redemption*, and are expressive of the idea, familiar among all people, of buying back or recovering by purchase that which had been lost or forfeited. In both the Old Testament and the New, the deliverance of man from the curse of sin is often represented by words borrowed from such commercial transactions.

The word *propitiation*, (*ilasterion*, *ilastimos*) occurs only in the New Testament, and only there in three places: Rom. iii., 25; 1 John ii., 2—iv., 10. The word “propitia-

tion" has reference either to the Mercy-Seat (Exo. xxv., 17, 22); or, more properly to the sacrifice, the blood of which was sprinkled on the Mercy-Seat, in order to make atonement for sin (Lev. xvi., 14, 16). In the three several places where it appears in the New Testament, it is applied directly to Him by whom the atonement is effected. In the Septuagint this word is used to translate the Hebrew כִּפָּר — *kopher*. The cover of the Ark or Mercy-Seat is termed *ilasterion*. The same use is made of it Heb. ix., 5. The verb, *ilasko*, from which it is derived, signifies to turn away, to appease anger."

In the Scriptures, the Greek word last above named is always used in connection with the idea of sacrifice, as the means by which offense is taken out of the way. Where it occurs in Rom. iii., 25, Christ is represented as set forth in view of the intelligent universe as a propitiatory sacrifice, and as such, is *the ground* of the *justification* of every one that believes. But in the other two passages of Scripture, — 2 John ii., 2 ; iv., 10, the divine Propitiator is set forth in still broader and more unqualified terms, as the propitiation for the sins "of the whole world," and the proof of God's great prior love to us, operative in the atonement before, and *independent of faith and love on our part*.

- These words then, Reconciliation, Redemption, and Propitiation, are all found in our English Bible as the terms chosen, and best suited to express in our language, the sense of the respective corresponding originals, by means of which the sacred writers strove to present to the minds of men varying aspects of that all-glorious and ineffable work which was accomplished by the Creating Word and "Mediator of the new Covenant."

Theologians in their study of the subject, have found it convenient to adopt still other words, in their efforts to elucidate and express doctrines and views appertaining to the matter, as they find, or think they find such revealed in Scripture. In this way, such words as *Satisfaction*, *Substitution*, *Vicarious*, and *Expiation*, have been brought into use. These all readily express their own appropriate meanings, and have their uses; but are more liable, doubtless, to lead our minds into erroneous conceptions, than the less specific and more comprehensive terms employed in our English Bible.*

Thus we see how the science of neology and the art of word-mongering have travailed with this mighty subject. The number and

* To this list of words, terms, and phrases expressive of the nature and character of the Atonement, Dr. Samson has added quite a number more from both the Scriptures and the theology of various languages. See his work on Atonement, pp. 8-16.

variety of these verbal inventions, both old and new, sufficiently prove the inadequacy of human language to express, and of human thought to grasp the stupendous truth in all its infinite dimensions. The beautiful and grateful thought of the ancient Hebrews respecting the subject as expressed in the word *Covering*, and the associations of that idea with the Mercy-Seat, over which hovered the Shekinah in lambent light, render that word peculiarly felicitous and appropriate to the subject, viewed in its manward aspects. The incorrigible wicked will, we are told, call, in an awful day to come, on the mountains and rocks to fall upon them and cover them from the sight of their Creator. How happy the thought, then, to each repentant soul, how sweet the hope of being covered by the love of Christ and by the spotless robe of his perfect righteousness!

The eternal purpose and effect of the Atonement was the evolvment, — the putting forth of Almighty power which should not only touch unthinkable immensity on every side, and fill all conceivable and inconceivable space, but should establish forever the scepter of Jehovah over all His Universe, of course embracing in its limitless grasp man, together with all matter. (Ephe. i., 20-23.) Infinite Love, Wisdom, and Righteousness

originated the sovereign, omnipotent scheme and applied it, through Infinite Mercy, in such way that the fallen state of humanity became thereby adjusted to all the absolute requirements of God's righteous government as "purposed in Christ Jesus."

It would seem that the determination to create such a creature as man, necessarily involved the sacrificial oblation on the part of the Creating Word, in order to accomplish the ulterior design of that specific act of the Creating Power. We do not think the utmost awe and reverence require us to halt or hesitate about applying the term *necessity* to any act of Almighty God; because we hold that each and every thing done by the Deity is supremely best, and that His nature and attributes are such that perfection must necessarily characterize his every act. He, therefore, cannot do otherwise than he does, without ceasing to be himself. We poor, purblind mortals are extremely liable to be mistaken in what we may conceive to be, in any case, the requirement of the law of necessity with God; but yet, that the law of absolute perfection is the law of his being and of his works too, in view of their end and purpose, cannot be reasonably doubted. Even "vessels of wrath" are "*fitted* to destruction."

It was the mighty work of the Atonement that invested our incarnate Saviour with the power and authority of Mediator (Isa. xliii., 25-27; xliv., 3; Heb. x., 12-14). It was upon that ground that He, the God-man, could assume and hold throughout all time and beyond time his priestly office of Intercessor; and by virtue of that most glorious act, he could send down the Holy Paraclete to abide with and in his people (John xvi., 7-14).

The infinite love and righteousness of God demanded and furnished the conservatory blood of atonement as the essential sanatory principle in his moral government. Through this love and righteousness, a touch-stone of truth was thereby kept alive even in the sin-darkened soul of man. God-consciousness was not utterly exterminated in the first fallen pair; and conscience is the organ of the moral law in man's heart. Under the plastic hand of Divine Grace it echoes the voice, and reflects upon the mind the moral character of the Divine Lawgiver. The blurred and defaced characters of His superscription and seal are, by the Spirit of Truth, retraced in letters of light and lines of love upon the regenerate heart of his human creature. By virtue of the divine power and policy expressed in the Atonement, it is now no longer

mere exemption from physical death, and the pleasures of an earthly Paradise, that are offered to men as the reward of dutiful, conscious obedience to their Creator; but a final triumph over death, the life everlasting, and the larger liberty of that "City which hath foundations," and into which the Serpent can never enter. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

We perceive, then, that it was through the infirmity and fall of man that God planned the most complete and triumphant victory over sin and Satan, and the crowning glory to His own moral government. He "took hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it." Then "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," when the Shekina of the Cross loomed up in lustrous power and glory over the debased ramparts of desecrated Eden. Even the degraded man could bare his brow all burning with shame, to that soft and soothing light that broke upon the world, as "the Day-Spring from on high arose with healing in his wings." The epithalamium of the Lamb and his bride began to be chanted in the courts of Heaven,

for all the intelligences of God's universe then saw that "God could be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

"Since God-collected and resumed in man
The firmaments, the strata, and the lights,
Fish, fowl, and beast, and insect—all their trains
Of various life caught back upon his arm,
Reorganized and constituted Man,
The microcosm, the adding up of works."—*Browning.*

With the centrifugal force of his Word, God threw out into space his whole creations, and with the centripetal power of his cross he holds all to the order and orbit of which his own Throne is the centre. Christ's Atonement, in its manward relations, was directly destined, *ex opere operato*, to satisfy and cancel the awful penalty due to sin, and to further act through God's administrative grace, as the Divinely ordained antidote for the cure of original guilt, and removal of sin from the heart and soul of the redeemed creature. In other words: for the destroying of "the enmity," and the covering of the offense; thereby rendering reconciliation *immediately*, and reunion *ultimately* possible between God and man. This, of course, would have, as it did have, the effect of offering salvation to every son and daughter of Adam. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ

Jesus ; whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith by his blood, for the exhibition of his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins before committed in the forbearance of God." (Rom. iii., 24, 25 R. V.)

The thorough and radical nature, purpose, and efficacy of Christ's atonement is most distinctly and fully attested by the Sacred Scriptures. They assure us that "God our Saviour, will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii., 4-6.) "He condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii., 3.) "He led captivity captive." (Ps. lxxviii., 18; Ephe. iv., 8.) He was anointed by God the Father "to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv., 18, 19, and Isa. lxi., 1-3.) "He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I. John ii., 2.) The whole world is therefore exhorted to "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i., 29.) Such phraseology

carries, irresistibly, the idea that Christ, in the Atonement, dealt with sin in its essential unity, and broke the sceptre of its absolute power over his whole creation, including his creature man. By that sovereign transcendent act of mercy and love on the part of his Redeemer, man was released effectually from the direful penalty of the law of sin, and from the absolute dominion of Satan ; so far as a responsible moral agent could be ransomed and set free by the benevolent act of another. But though the full ransom price for all, was completely paid down by Christ; yet the prisoner who shall prefer the darkness of his loathsome dungeon, shall not be dragged thence by force and against his own will. For absolute, arbitrary power can have no proper place in any moral government, human or divine.

In the following single sentence Calvin has eloquently and with admirable accuracy expressed the power, purpose and finality of Christ's Atonement to all men who do not willfully reject it. "Submitting to our poverty, he has transferred to us his riches ; assuming our weakness, he has strengthened us by his power ; accepting our mortality, he has conferred on us his immortality ; taking on himself the load of iniquity with which we were oppressed, he has clothed us

with his righteousness ; descending to the earth, he has prepared a way for our ascending to heaven ; becoming with us the Son of Man, he has made us with himself, the sons of God.”*

Now, then, though death, according to the inevitable law of sin, has passed upon all, and consequently every child born into this world experiences and shows some of the dreadful effects of the primal fall ; still the human infant comes into being with God’s righteous law—the beautiful code of love, written with God’s own finger upon its “heart of flesh.” And amid the chaos that reigns around the human soul, the conscience is made to reflect some gleams of that “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” And therefore it is that

“Man, wretched man, when e’er he stoops to sin,
Feels, with the act, a strong remorse within.”

How early in the age of any child the Serpent may enter and exude his virus into the mind, we cannot know ; but the true spiritual capacity or aptitude must be congenital with the heart, and the law of spiritual life must adhere and linger there, else how could the Apostle Paul say of the heathen that he may “do *by nature* the things contained in the law”? (Rom. ii., 14.) And in the same

*Institutes, 6th Amer. Ed., Vol. II., p. 527.

place the Apostle clearly teaches that men without the law, [i. e. the Mosaic law], do commit sin as well as those who have that law. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." The justice of this decree of the Supreme Lawgiver is apparent from the fact as here stated by Paul, that "the Gentiles, which have not the [Mosaic] law," may nevertheless, "show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else accusing one another." (Rom. ii., 15.) Upon the ground of this same natural instinct, common to humanity, the idolatrous Lycaonians were exhorted by the same Apostle to observe the fact that the true and living God had "left not Himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (Acts xiv., 17.)

Now from the revealed characteristics of demons, we know that they have no such internal, subjective law or faculty of conscience, no such witnessings for God, and no capacity for experiencing gladness at His goodness. They can only "believe and tremble."

We repeat then, that this divine law of love "written in their hearts," accompanies into being every babe that breathes. But, "they have this treasure in earthen vessels," "that the excellency of the power may be of God." This treasure may, in their subsequent life in this "world lying in wickedness," become hidden and finally lost, through the blinding power of the "God of this world." But if the child departs life before it knowingly and willfully renounces God's holy law of love, the Spirit of that law most surely sanctifies and saves its soul for the sake of Him by whose Atonement it was implanted and preserved there during the infantile span of existence. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes free from the law of sin and death," every soul that rebels not personally against it. "He condemned sin in the flesh" for every child of the flesh, and "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." We have seen that He is certainly given in at least some measure to every human being; and as God the Father "delivered him up for us *all*," he will "also freely give" with him "all things" to those who do not willfully reject the gift of his Son.

Every babe has, consequently, been "re-

deemed unto God," and snatched out of the grasp of "him that hath the power of death." For such a one as has not "trodden under foot the Son of God," nor "done despite unto the Spirit of grace," mere physical death has no terrors ; and they can know nothing of that death that hath "sting." The dying babe, therefore, but "falls asleep in Jesus, and wakes to weep no more." "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever." (Rom., xi., 36.)

"On earth, join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end."—

MILTON.

CHAPTER IV.

“DESTINATION” OF THE ATONEMENT.

“Jesus by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”—*Heb. ii.*, 9.

After carefully examining the works of many able writers on the subject of the Atonement, we are brought to the conclusion that from the earliest Christian ages down to the present time, the real difference between evangelical writers who have contended with one another about the *definite* and the *indefinite* extent of the atonement, has sprung from those who support the former view, mixing up and confounding together the peculiar work of Christ and the distinctive work of the Holy Spirit. The contestants do not differ as to the *intrinsic worth* of Christ's death, nor as to the Divine *application* of the Atonement. Its worth, both sides hold to be infinite, and its saving application they equally agree is limited first or last in one way or another. But they differ wide as the poles in their views as to what they are pleased to term “the Divine intention” res-

pecting the subject of atonement ; or, as some phrase it, the "destination" of Christ's death.

Our limits will not allow us to follow up the controversy on this subject, nor to canvass the argument, pro and con, in its minute and multifarious details. But if we can succeed in extracting and comparing, as we go along, but a few of the more important and leading ideas and arguments from both sides of the question, we may be enabled to arrive at just as safe and sound a conclusion as if we waded through the whole extent of the bristling chapparal.

It requires no Shakespearean or other masterful knowledge of the human mind and heart, to convince us that if the Maker of man had not interposed to break the force, and limit the effects of "Adam's recollection of his fall," by immediately planting the germ of HOPE in his mind, he would inevitably have been left to the destroying fiend of *despair*, and soon have become an incarnate demon. If the "still small voice" of the compassionate Creator had not been kept alive and active in his conscience, he never could otherwise have acquired the grace of true repentance. The insidious poison and all-pervading force of evil unchecked, must have continually and rapidly grown and dif-

fused its venomous spirit in and throughout the man's whole nature, until every spark and rudiment of good would have been utterly extinguished, leaving him a thorough child of Satan. And had he become such, he could only have begotten such. Christ did then evidently interpose at once, as seems certain too from the Scripture narrative, to redeem and restore Adam and Eve to the merciful care and pardoning grace of the Lord God. Not by restoring to them their lost rectitude of nature; but by expiating their offense in his own Atonement and reconciling God to them *as they stood*. Thus, notwithstanding their abnormal and degraded condition, their state was rendered salvable through the power and ministration of the regenerating Spirit of Grace. Adam fell upon the outstretched arm of his benevolent Maker.

And if this, or anything like this, was foreordained and enacted in behalf of the representative man and head of his race, is it not irresistibly clear and conclusive that whatever of this nature was done for him was done also for his progeny? There can be no doubt but that the gracious Atonement decreed in the councils of heaven, and then vouchsafed to the poor exiles from Eden, inured to the full benefit of their posterity. There is, consequently, no tittle of evidence

that God's displeasure rested on Cain any more than on Abel until the former committed an act of personal, actual transgression against God's holy law. And instead of repenting for that, he added sin to sin. Envy towards his more humble and obedient brother took possession of his heart, and there rankled into fratricide.

The simple fact that every human being comes into life blessed with the faculty of *hope*, is itself conclusive evidence to our mind, that the Atonement inured to the direct benefit of all without a single exception. A state of absolute despair is hell. And the supporting prop and benign power of the cross of Christ, must always be first completely removed, before that dark and dreadful state can possibly ensue. And not only hope, but the faculty and power of appreciating, even in slight degree, the true, the beautiful, and the good, must necessarily emanate from the beneficent hand of Almighty Love. Demons are wholly destitute of such sentiment and disposition. When in the conscious presence of the blessed Saviour of sinners, "they cried out saying, 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?'" (Matt. viii., 29; Mark v., 7; Luke viii., 28.) From these several pas-

sages of Scripture it clearly appears that demons are without hope ; they look forward only to "*torment.*" The governing rule of their perverted nature, as we are taught in Scripture, is the direct rule of wrong—the law of falsehood, malignity and death. That hope, and the love of the true, the beautiful and the good, are ever most vivid and active in the minds and hearts of the unsophisticated young of our species, is strong proof that the presence and vital energy of those functions have been preserved in human nature, under the conservative power and protecting arm of the Cross.

Men are, consequently taught to "account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation." (2 Peter iii, 15.) "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v, 9.) "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." (Rom. ii, 4.) "We love him, because he first loved us," (1 John iv, 19.) "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John iii, 3.) These Scriptures not only proclaim the precious Gospel as a fact, but they at the same time set forth its peculiar and genuine philosophy. And they, together with the whole gospel of God to man, assume that there are capacities and functions

implanted and preserved in man's nature which qualify and enable him, if he will, to accept and cherish the free salvation. But his will, like all his other faculties, has become distorted and depraved. He does not, therefore, spontaneously choose the right and reject the wrong. He must first be touched and converted by the extraneous, objective power of God's love. The Divine love is abundantly manifested towards every one of his human creatures, in his long suffering mercy and patience towards all. The paternal, renewing, regenerating love of God comes to be "shed abroad" in every mind and heart that simply opens itself to receive the blessing; or rather, into every mind and heart that is not wantonly closed against the blessing. "Behold," says the Saviour, "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii, 20.)

That theory which limits the "intention" of the Atonement, the "destination" of Christ's death, as it is termed by some, to the identical range or orbit of saving grace, while they allow, as they do, the *infinite intrinsic worth* of Christ's death, seems to be without shadow of consistency. For why should its *infinite worth* fall short in due

effect, any more than *infinite purpose and design*? The truth must be that neither *worth* nor *design* can fall short, in God's hand, of that whereunto he directs it. And, for our part, we utterly repudiate the ground taken by some learned writers who have, at various times, undertaken to maintain the doctrine of unlimited Atonement against ingenious special pleaders in theology, by conceding that because man exists under a moral government, therefore the Deity could not provide, in advance, for every contingency dependent on the free, perverse will of man. In our judgment, God's foreknowledge and providential control, are just as supreme and absolute in everything appertaining to the moral, as to the physical world. We must be careful, however, to make the proper distinction between *absolute* and *arbitrary* power. All things in all worlds must exist and move according to "the good pleasure of His will." Yet, God, of course, governs every several thing according to its own proper nature. And mere physical or arbitrary force, as we have before remarked, can, obviously, have no proper place in a purely moral government. As *gravitation* seems to be the fixed, fundamental law conserving the planetary universe, and regulating the order of its motive forces ;

so *love*, which the Apostle John tells us is the essential element of God's own nature, seems to be the appointed power set to rule all God's moral universe.

The fact then, that man is capable of experiencing at all the sentiment of pure and virtuous love, proves that he is not only not a demon, but that he is capable of loving best that which best deserves his love. But he has been blinded by sin and "led captive at the will of Satan," and nothing but God's truth can set him free. That is freely offered to all, for Christ came "that all might have life and have it more abundantly."

The philosophy of the moral power of the Cross for which we here contend, is well expressed by Bishop Butler in the following sentence: "Consciousness of a rule or guide of action, in creatures who are capable of considering it as given them by their Maker, not only raises immediately a sense of duty, but also a sense of security in following it, and of danger in deviating from it." * "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation," by Dr. James B. Walker, also expounds the same truth admirably well.

Does not the all-comprehending nature and the expressly universal aim of Christ's ministry on earth, give us the correct idea of

* Butler's Analogy; Malcom's Ed. 17th, p. 165.

the extent and true destination of his Atonement? He preached a world-wide salvation, and sent out his gospel "into all the world," "to every creature" of "all nations." He, himself declared and expounded his doctrine to his enemies and active opponents as well as to his friends and followers.

There is no more ground then for restricting the design and extent of the Atonement, simply because all men do not accept it;—for measuring design by effect in the case,—than for restricting and talking about a waste of work and precious words and earnest exhortations thrown away in the matter of Christ's preaching and general ministry on earth. It certainly seems more consistent with all our ideas of a wise and prudent economy, that Christ, in his crowded busy work on earth, would not waste words and precious time with men who, he knew could not by any possibility repent of their sins and come to him to be healed, than that he would withhold the redeeming power of his blood from any because he foresaw that they would ultimately renounce the great salvation. As he evidently allowed his sacred person to be spurned and rejected of men, why not so, also, his blood of Atonement?

But, say the definite restrictionists, "the fact is the best interpreter of the intention :"

“if all men are not to be thereby saved, and it is revealed that all will not be, wherefore this waste of precious blood, this superabundance of expiation on the part of Christ?” We reply, *non sequiter*. It does not follow because some men willfully and with dire perversity, disdain and reject the blood of Christ wherewith they were “sanctified,” that therefore the blood is wasted and without effect, and equally great effect too, with that which operates to the salvation of others, in the moral government of God. The Lord sends his gentle dews and refreshing showers down upon “the just and the unjust.” His bright sun sheds its resplendent sheet of light over broad regions of the earth, but some animals hide themselves from the face of day, burrowing in loathsome holes and hollows, in deep dank caves and caverns, and come out to crawl and prowl about only in the night. They choose darkness rather than light. And again: the genial warmth that accompanies sunlight, quickens into vital development many seeds slumbering in the bosom of the earth, while it generates putrefaction and facilitates decay in other things. Just so in the moral world. The very power and grace which softens the hearts and saves the souls of many, hardens the hearts and stif-

fens the necks of others. If we receive not the dispensations of His saving grace into glad and grateful hearts ; then, we shall surely vindicate, in our self-destroyed souls, His righteous justice. We were made for his glory, and glorify him we must ; if not in the one way, then in the other.

It is wilful weakness and criminal fear on our part, that leads, and so strongly constrains us to distort and hide from our view, any attribute of the Divine nature that has been revealed to us. God's justice, like his benevolence, is infinitely good and perfect. Upon this ground it is manifestly consistent and strictly pertinent, that the terrible question should be propounded to men : "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." It is indeed "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." But whence the idea and assumption of "*sorer* punishment," if the blood of the Son of God was never shed for those who "count it an unholy thing?" Men did not and could not spit upon and abuse the sacred person of our Lord, until he voluntarily came and offered himself to them

for a Saviour ; and no more could any one tread under foot and count the blood of Atonement an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, unless the same had been freely given into their power, with the like benevolent purpose that brought his person into the profane hands of those who rejected and crucified him.

But to our mind, if that pathetic wail of commiseration which the Lord poured forth over incorrigible Jerusalem stood alone, it would be sufficient testification of the truth that the lost might be saved if they would. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and *ye would not !*" How could he ever have gathered them if they had been excluded from the benefits of his Atonement ? And could Incarnate Truth have said *ye would not*, if he knew they *could not* ? Impossible ! That one case, then, is itself amply sufficient to decide the question. Many are indeed lost eternally for whom Jesus died ; but they wantonly choose that awful fate for themselves. To all such he has said, and continues to say as long as their probation lasts, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." His word assures us that under his dispensation of grace, "There is no difference between the

Jew and the Greek ; for the same Lord over all is rich toward all that call upon him, for every one who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x., 12, 13.) Some will not call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. But never are such described in Scripture as being excluded from the benefits and privileges of the Atonement of Christ. On the contrary, they are characterized as persons "Having the *understanding* darkened, being *alienated* from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." (Ephe. iv., 18, 19.) They will not melt at the story of the cross, and go down to its foot in contrite humility, that they may go up by its elevating power into eternal life and glory. In rejecting the justifying atonement of Christ for the sin of the world, man willfully assumes the terrible responsibility of his own sin and guilt, and must, of course, abide the awful consequences.

Much ingenious special pleading and learned sophistry have been expended, in the vain effort to turn the salient point of those plain, direct, literal passages of Scripture which declare, in the broadest and most unequivocal terms, the universality of the Atonement in its all-comprehending reach

and efficacy. But it is perfectly apparent that all such efforts have been incited under the misapprehension that universal Atonement necessarily conflicted with some other doctrines of Scripture to which the stimulus of religious controversy had given undue prominence. We humbly trust we have done something already towards tranquilizing nervous orthodoxy, in simply assigning to the cross of Christ its true place and preëminent position in the Divine scheme of salvation, and we hope to accomplish still more in the same pacific direction before we finish.

The doctrine of universal, unrestricted salvation, must ever rest secure and unshaken upon such texts of Scripture as the following, which are but a few of the multitude that might easily be found to the same effect. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i., 29.) "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii., 2.) "The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Ps. cxlv., 9.) "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John i., 9.) "Who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." (1 Tim.

ii., 6.) "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." (Rom. viii., 32.) "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him." (Luke xx., 38.) "One died for all." (2 Cor. v., 14.) "He died for all." (2 Cor. v., 15.) "For God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." (Rom. xi., 32.) "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." (John i., 16.) "Christ the Saviour of the world." (John iv., 42; 1 Jno. iv., 14.) "Giveth life unto the world." (John vi., 33, 51.) "The world is mine, and the fulness thereof." (Ps. l., 12.) "Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world." (Ps. xlix., 1.) "I came to save the world." (John xii., 47.) "Trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe." (1 Tim. iv., 10.) "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mk. xvi., 15.)

Now, with these texts of Scripture before us, shall we allow any theory of "systematic theology," framed together by the wit of man, or any preconceived partiality or prejudice founded on human creeds or confessions of faith, or anything else under heaven, to lead us to the monstrous conclusion that Almighty God could stoop to tantalize his poor feeble fallen creature, by

offering him, through the ministry of Jesus and his Apostles, a redemption that was not intended to embrace him! For that, disguise it as you may, is the simple and necessary sense of the restriction theory of the Atonement. If the Atonement covered not the sin of the whole world: if there was not sufficient saving power in the blessed Gospel for every soul of man, would the merciful Jesus, the incarnate God, have ordered it to be offered to the whole world, and to every creature in the world? Utterly impossible! It was not, and is not offered to demons for their salvation and restoration to God's favor, because they are excluded from its saving power. Towards them, its power is repellent and penal. But towards man it presents an attractive, saving, and sanitary side, and consequently the whole family of man is embraced in its merciful provisions.

Whenever the "aching void" in man's heart, caused by his estrangement through sin from his Creator, becomes a matter of conscious concern to himself, he is instinctively led to look out beyond his own impotent faculties and resources for some extraneous, objective source of help and consolation. If happily he finds through faith the crucified Redeemer of sinners, he realizes at once in him the heart's desire—"the

desire of all nations." And as often in after life as the converted soul may lapse from this its life's love, and fall under the power of sin, it will still have to come back for peace and comfort to Him who, having "offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." This one sacrifice then must be an all-sufficient oblation and everduring bond of union and fellowship with God to all those who have never, by personal transgression, forfeited its complete salvation. What need we, then, of further evidence or argument to establish the eternal salvation of all infants, who depart this life before they have willfully undone themselves? And what need is there of sacramental works on the part of man to supplement the perfect work of God? To the intelligent believer, those ordinances of the Christian Church, unwarrantably termed "sacraments," are Divinely appointed visible mementoes, palpable reminders, and symbolic souvenirs of the One Divine Sacrifice through which we have hope. But they clearly have no place nor power in the salvation of innocent irresponsible infants, to whom they have no meaning, and who are all effectually justified and saved by the Eternal Archetype to whom those types but point.

CHAPTER V.

PARDON, JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION.

"By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."—*Rom. v., 18.*

Having given, in the three preceding chapters, as much space as our limits allow to the contemplation of the Atonement of Christ in its two grand, leading phases—the one its relation to God, and the other its relation to man—we now desire to direct the attention of our reader to the additional and vastly important fact that the Atonement, in its manward relations, also branches into two general subordinate departments or distinct principles of effective power. These two latter classes of Divine grace which emanate from the Cross towards the human family, may simply be designated, respectively, as that which God does *for* man, and that which He does *in* man. To the former class—the *for* man department—belong pardon, justification, and adoption: to the latter—the *in* man department—belong the gifts of regeneration, faith, repentance, and sanctification.

The apostle Paul clearly and pointedly makes this important distinction in the Divine system of human salvation when he says, "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were *yet sinners*, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being *now* justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Rom. v., 8, 9.) And the apostle Peter but declares the same fundamental truth, where he says, "For Christ also hath once-for-all (*απαξ*) suffered for sins, the just for *the unjust*, that he might bring us to God," (1 Pet. iii., 18.) But this truth is made most clear, and receives its most conclusive and satisfactory illustration in our Lord's life and ministry on earth. He first came and manifested God's amazing mercy and goodness towards the world, and then suffered "without the gate," and went away in his glorified body before he sent the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to convert his people and to abide with them and in them to the end of the world.

The words pardon and justification are used interchangeably, to express the generic idea of God's gracious act towards man, in the forgiveness of sins and acceptance of the sinner. In that sense pardon is the word of the Old Testament; while justification is peculiar to the New, and

is met with there but in three places. (Rom. iv., 25 ; v., 16, 18.) Pardon conveys the idea of a more simple, direct and immediate exercise of the Divine clemency ; while the apostle Paul, in his use of the word *justification*, evidently aims to make the term carry within itself suggestion of the ground of pardon, viz.: the righteousness and obedience of Christ. He uses it to describe that state of acquittal and complete absolution under the law of grace, into which sinful souls are brought by virtue of Christ's righteousness being imputed to them by God.

We seem to be warranted by this Scriptural use of the term in regarding the matter to which it refers, somewhat in the nature of a *judicial* act on the part of the Deity ; and so regarding it, we are enabled to get a more distinct and satisfactory—a more clearly defined idea of the subject than could be apprehended in any other way.

Justification is a well defined forensic term ; and while its etymological form would attach to it the idea of being *made just*, it is never used in that sense by sound and scholarly Protestants. Some ancient writers were misled as to the meaning of the word by the laws of etymology ; and the Church of Rome having fallen into the error, per-

sists in perpetuating it. As a judicial term it simply expresses sentence of righteous acquittal from legal liability. It implies the proof or admission of the facts or acts charged, but pleads and sets up in arrest of adverse judgment, or in bar of condemnatory sentence, some other controlling law as applicable to the case, under which the accused, notwithstanding the admitted facts, goes free, exonerated and justified, out of court. In this sense precisely, the apostle Paul uses the word *δικαιωσις*, and we have no right to stretch the term to cover more ground than strictly and properly attaches to it.

Pardon and justification are, strictly speaking, distinct acts in nature, character and import. Pardon corresponds more nearly to simple, gratuitous forgiveness of offence or injury, and remission of incurred penalty. As where naked, executive or judicial lenity discharges a condemned criminal from condign punishment, in a case where no plea in bar of condemnatory judgment can legally be set up, and where sentence of punishment has been, or is just ready to be pronounced. While justification, as stated above, is based on some interposing or intervening provision of law that comes in to control the disposal of the case. -But under the economy of Divine grace they may be considered and

used as substantially synonymous, since it is only the free God-given atonement of Christ that the poor guilty sinner can ever plead in bar of the just punishment for sin. Here, every one who is forgiven is justified, and every one justified is freely forgiven. (Acts xiii., 38, 39 ; 2 Cor. v., 21 ; Rom. v., 15-18.)

In human governments—even the best devised and the best administered—the practical dispensation of justice is, like all other human institutions, necessarily defective. And this is so much so at times that the execution of the letter of the law grossly violates its true spirit. To cure such defects as far as possible, the Chief Executive is usually invested with authority to exercise the power of pardoning ; *i. e.* to remit in whole or in part the penalty prescribed for certain crimes and offences against the laws of the land. The whole idea of free pardon and executive clemency is, therefore, based on the fact that the administration of justice is imperfect. This being so, it clearly follows that in the Divine government there is no place for absolute pardon, no possibility for the penalty attached to sin to be freely and unconditionally remitted. Because God's justice, in both its nature and its administration, is righteous, and perfect, and holy. In God's moral government the penalty of sin is death, and

when man transgressed the awful penalty had necessarily to be inflicted. Jesus, the Christ, voluntarily stepped in and suffered the punishment in the place of his sinning creature. Now then we are justified by his blood; and it is manifest that no man can come unto God the Father but by Him. (John xiv., 6.) For, as the Scriptures say, "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix., 22.) God's pardoning grace is indeed free to men, offered "without money and without price;" but it cost the precious, priceless blood of the Son of God. That blood is the solvent of sin and the cause and means of justification to a lost world.

Now, the Church of Rome, in her theory respecting this matter, most unwarrantably confounds justification and sanctification. The forgiveness of sins, the removal of the dominant power of inherent sin from the human heart, and the positive infusion of Divine grace into the soul, are all, according to the Romish theory, embraced in and constitute the distinctive work of justification.* The logical necessities of her elaborately artificial and peculiar system of theology require this tortuous strain upon the revealed plan of salvation. But nothing could be

* See Coun. Trent, Sess. VI., Chap. VII., and Cat. Rome, Part I. Chap. I.; also Lec. on Justification, by John Henry Newman.

more palpably subversive of the whole Gospel system. For this is making the grace wrought *in* us by the Holy Spirit the ground of our acceptance with God. This theory logically supersedes and sets aside entirely the Atoning work of Christ; while the Scriptures teach that the peculiar work of Christ, as Saviour of the world, had to be done and "finished," before the regenerating, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit could begin. And this, then, must have been the relative positions of the two works from before the foundation of the world.

The Scriptures declare that on the ground of the propitiation wrought out by Christ, God justifies the *ungodly* (Rom. iv., 5), and accepts the repentant, believing *sinner*, not as sanctified, but as covered by the robe of Christ's spotless righteousness. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not *impute* sin," &c. (Rom. iv., 5-8.) Christ said of himself, "I am the resurrection and the life." (John xi., 25.) And again, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John xiv., 6.) And "I came not to call the *righteous*, but *sinners*, to repentance." (Matt. ix., 13; Mk. ii., 17; Lk. v., 32.)

The work of the Atonement, then, had the direct and immediate effect of reconciling

God, in his long-suffering mercy, to the changed and disordered state of things on earth. So far so, at least, as to secure for man the pardon of inherited sin and constitutional imperfection, and the friendly, benevolent interposition and efficient aid of the Holy Spirit. The fallen, unfaithful man was, then, by the interposition of Christ, retained as perfectly and completely within the Paternal kingdom of grace, and under the benign favor of God, as he was in his primal state of innocence. For Christ stepped in as surety and substitute for his fallen creature, and bore in his own person the necessary penalty due to human sin. (See 1 Pet. ii., 24; Col. i., 20; Luke ii., 14; Ephe. ii., 16, 17.)

“Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom. v., 9, 10.) Upon which Scripture we have the following comment by Dr. Angus in *Ano. Par. Bible*. “In verses 9, 10, the certainty and completeness of our salvation is shown by an argument *à fortiori*; and this is presented in the form of a triple antithesis. If in our state of enmity the Saviour would DIE to procure the

primary blessing of JUSTIFICATION, 'much more' in our reconciled state he EVER LIVETH (Comp., Heb. vii., 25) to complete his work in our SALVATION from all the consequences of our sin and of God's displeasure."

From this it will be discovered that we have the weighty authority of the great and learned Dr. Angus with us in holding *justification* to be the *primary* work of God's grace that springs forth from the great mother-stock of Atonement.

Nothing seems more plainly set forth in Scripture than that all the merciful, blessed work of the Atonement for sin, was wholly external to man and entirely independent of him. Its object, purpose and effect, in its manward direction, were the securing of pardon, justification and adoption for Adam and his whole race. Sin being forgiven and blotted out in the blood of Christ, man instantly and *ipso facto*, stood *rectus in curia* before the August Tribunal of high Heaven. Dying in that state, as infants do that die, heaven is the inheritance of the redeemed soul through Christ its Saviour.

Does anyone object that the infant, though not yet guilty of actual personal transgression, is nevertheless in a disordered, imperfect moral and spiritual state, and therefore un-

fitted for admittance into heaven? We reply by simply asking where is the slightest shadow of evidence in the Scriptures, that such inherited depravity is ever punished by The Just Judge with eternal death? And we would also propound another question which seems to us decisive upon this point. Is the adult saint whose hope of heaven, through faith in Christ, is brightest and most cheering, without sin in this his state of earthly probation? Is he able to lay claim to moral and spiritual perfection on this side of the grave? Are not the very best still sinners and "unprofitable servants?" By what parity of reasoning, then, can irresponsible infants be excluded from heaven and from the everlasting arms of their Redeemer, simply on the ground of their naturally disordered moral and spiritual state? Away with the unworthy, short-sighted, and utterly distorted view of God's infinitely benevolent plan of human salvation! Jesus Christ is the Saviour of *sinners*.

The Scriptures in no place teach that sinners are saved by God on account of the work wrought in them by the Holy Spirit, but simply and only for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Saviour. And, therefore, when we have polluted our souls with sin—actual, personal sin—the Holy Paraclete comes for

the sake of Christ and cleanses and regenerates and abides with, and in those who will receive Him, because we have obtained mercy of God through his crucified Son. And since the fall of the first man, no knowledge of God, without the Mediator, has been available to salvation. The fruits of the Spirit are the consoling evidences of our acceptance and salvation; but never in the Book of God are they represented as the meritorious cause of salvation. Jesus, the Christ of God, is the one only all-complete, eternal Saviour of sinners. And he will save and does save by his work, by his word, by his Spirit, and by any and every other means which he sees to be best adapted to the case of each and every soul which God the Father has given him.

Justification perfectly and admirably expresses the Gospel idea of the decisive effect which Christ's Atoning work accomplished in our behalf, but wholly outside of us, and independently of any agency on our part. And if this term were diverted entirely to other use, and bore any other or different signification, we would certainly need to find or invent some other word to express the sense, and answer to the use which the word justification now serves in Protestant theology.

That the Scriptures do teach that Christ performed a great and blessed work *for* the world, independently of the world itself, is too plain to be questioned. That the apostle Paul uses this word *justification* to express the mighty effects and immediate results of that work in its relations to us, is equally plain. "Raised again for our justification." Now certainly man had nothing to do with the raising of Christ from the dead. "The *free gift* is of many offences *unto justification*." If man had earned this boon by any work of faith, fidelity, repentance, suffering, sympathy even, or in any other way, would the Apostle have termed it a "*free gift*" ? Surely not. Then again, he says,—repeating the declaration of this fact:—"As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the *free gift* came upon all men *unto justification of life*." What is this, but that the free gift, in its scope and extent, went to the length of justifying *all* men, and that justification amounts to *the gift of life* ? Why then, it may possibly be asked, are not all men saved ? The answer is: because when they come to years of responsibility and accountability, they willfully forfeit and fling away the precious gift, and choose to pursue the broad and heedless

way to destruction. The Giver of life has said to all such : "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." (John v., 40.) All such say, "We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke xix., 14.)

It is not only plain that the Apostle means strictly and literally a *free gift*, when he uses that phrase ; but equally plain that he has no reference whatever to anything done *in* us, but only to a mighty work of mercy done *for* us. For it is the same Apostle who says, Christ reconciled us unto God "by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Ephes. ii., 16.) "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii., 24.) "Who gave himself a ransom for *all* to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii., 6.)

The deliverance of fallen man from the power and condemnation of sin, was effected, then, just simply by the payment of a ransom. The sinning creature was justly held in bondage. He had incurred the awful penalty which attaches to the righteous law under which he was created, and until that penalty was satisfied he could not be delivered. The blood of Christ is the necessary and only ransom that could meet the case

*Redemption means deliverance by the payment of a ransom, and is applied in Scripture to deliverance from sin in its guilt, power, and consequences." Anno. Par. Bible, note on Rom. iii., 24.

and discharge the sinner. The blood of the Lamb of God is all sufficient to this end because it met all the demands of Divine justice. And here we have the true idea of the proper distinction between *justification* and mere gratuitous *pardon*.

It is passing strange how the Socinian, who reads the Bible, can fail to discover that not even the intercession of Christ in our behalf could avail to save us from the just penalty for sin, if it were not for the fact that He is enabled to set up the acceptable plea of his own blood in bar of judgment against all who, through faith, "*retain*" him as their infallible Advocate on high.

Even in "this world lying in wickedness," we may, through faith, love, and obedience, walk with God as a Saviour, and if we walk humbly we shall not go about to establish our own righteousness, but will submit ourselves unto the righteousness which is of God, and acknowledge that we have nothing to glory in before him.

Justification then, effects a great and decisive change in the sinner's legal *status* under the Divine government, and operates, *ipso facto*, to the "giving of life." The subsequent successive work of the Holy Spirit that renews the heart and makes holy, is, nevertheless, absolutely necessary to recover

the self-destroyed, and to renew spiritual life in those who have willfully forfeited and lost it. Because "there is no more sacrifice for sin." Yet the mighty sin-slaying cross of Christ stands unremoved, and unshaken in the very centre of God's moral government, and to that the Spirit simply leads back the repentant prodigal soul that has gone astray from the Father's house and wasted his living. It is evident then that little infants are, by the justifying power of the cross of Christ, rendered strictly and literally *innocent*, since the Adamic taint is all the sin to their charge. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v., 6.)

That the work and "free gift" of "*justification unto life*," is the foundation upon which other gifts and graces of the Spirit are communicated to men as God sees fit, creates no necessity whatever for confounding those subsequent graces with the *prior* "free gift." The sacred Scriptures, while they fully and clearly teach the fact, and, to some extent, the nature and character of all those subsequent works of Divine grace, furnish us very appropriate and specific appellatives for them. If we confuse the terms, or attribute to one what belongs to another, as the Romanists, for special purposes, seek to do,

and as some others do inadvertently, we inevitably confuse and confound our own ideas respecting those grave and sacred subjects, and fall into very damaging errors.

It is, doubtless, just from blinding errors that originally sprung up out of this very source of confusion in the use of Biblical and theological terms, that so large a portion of the Christian world were ever brought to doubt and question the salvation of all infants that die in infancy. It is a most striking and noteworthy fact that such doubt and question never arose among Christian people or churches in the times when the pure Gospel was preached by Jesus and his Apostles. The cause and origin of the doubt and difficulty is evidently, then, not in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but in those defective systems of theology which have been built up outside the gospel orbit.

In regard to the remaining subject of this chapter, Adoption, we need to say but very few words. We have classed it among the blessed works of grace which God does *for* man, because it is expressly mentioned in Scripture as one of the immediate, direct blessings of redemption. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were made under

the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv., 4, 5.) It was necessary, as we learn from this passage, that men should be redeemed from the curse in order to receive the adoption of sons. The necessary primeval work of redemption having been accomplished, that of adoption ensues as a legitimate consequence, God "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. i., 5.) "And *because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." (Gal. iv., 6.) "BECAUSE YE ARE SONS."

From the texts just quoted we see that while Adoption is certainly a gracious work of God *for* man, the word adoption, as used in Scripture, conveys the idea of something more than a mere external act of Deity. It accomplishes an internal as well as an external work for man. "Ye have *received* the Spirit of adoption." (Rom. viii., 15.) Adoption then would seem to constitute the connecting link in the economy of grace, between that which is done *for* man and that which is done *in* man by his Creator. It would seem, too, to be a progressive work which does not attain its complete consummation in the present life. "For the earnest ex-

pectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. viii., 19.) "Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Ib., 23.) "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." (1 John, iii., 2.)

So far, then, as adoption is an external work of God *for* man, there is, of course, no difficulty in concluding that all new-born infants who, as we have seen, are freely justified and sanctified* by the blood of Christ, are also recipients of this additional blessing. From the Scriptures just above quoted, we see that the adoption of believers does not take full effect in the present world. The repentant sinner who has been converted and brought back under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to resume his dutiful allegiance to his Creator, receives the Spirit of adoption, under whose inspirations he, like the prodigal son, turns his heart and his face towards his Father's house, and sets out on that course of life which, in the end shall bring him to his heavenly home and into the full fruition of his joint heirship with Christ. Death only shortens the journey for the dy-

* We use the word "sanctified" here in its more literal sense : to set apart, to consecrate.

ing babe, and the same Spirit of adoption receives and introduces into its glorified state the infantile soul that has been "washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor., vi., 11.)

In Jesus Christ, the Saviour, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii., 9.) The redeemed are therefore "complete in him." And from other Scripture we know that the whole Godhead entered into the work of Atonement, and co-operated together for the salvation of man. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John iii., 16.) And throughout the whole work, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor., v., 19.) There is evidently no need, then, for any further special work in behalf of any soul that has not willfully despised and rejected the all-sufficient work of Christ's atonement. And this personal individual wickedness and guilt evidently does not, and cannot lie at the door of any irresponsible infant. But does any one still contend that such infant "must be born again"? Let us then go on to examine that point in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

REGENERATION.

“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free spirit.”—*Ps. li., 12.*

We must now proceed to take a brief, bird’s-eye view—our prescribed space will allow no more—of the benevolent, blessed work of grace that God does *in* man towards his salvation. We shall here, of course, only attempt to treat the subject in its special relationship to the salvation of infants.

Let the reader bear in mind what has heretofore been remarked, that revealed truth has been given to the world, not so much in logical as in aphoristical form, and consequently the sacred writers have not always scrupulously observed any precise demarcation between the workings of Divine grace *for* man and *in* man. Yet such distinction in the order and operations of saving grace is abundantly apparent in various portions of Scripture. And it is necessary to any just view of the Divine scheme of human salvation, that we clearly apprehend and keep

such distinction in mind. All the beneficence of God towards man, and the Divine grace in man, are but branches springing up, through the Spirit's work, out of the great tap-root and mighty trunk-stem of the Atonement. That is the fundamental principle, the constitutional basis, so to speak, of the Divine government, which includes all and vitalizes all. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that at times each should be spoken of as if it were the whole, because the life of the whole is in its several parts ; but yet, no separate part is in fact the whole.

The word *regeneration* etymologically signifies a being begotten again. The phrase is Scriptural ; was used by our Lord himself (John iii., 3), and is evidently a highly figurative, a strong metaphorical expression, used to convey the idea of that thorough, radical change in the moral and spiritual disposition and character of man, which the Gospel shows to be absolutely necessary to his permanent peace with God. And this essential change is uniformly represented in Scripture as a work of the Holy Spirit wrought in our heart and soul. Its accomplished effect is to renew the heart, to purify the affections, to convert the mind, and to change the tenor and current of man's life and conduct, so that he shall come to hate, and es-

chew, and strive against sin, and to fear, reverence and love God. As to the *method* by which this mysterious and wonderful change is wrought in the heart and soul of man, we dare not essay to inquire, since our Lord has himself refrained from its exposition further than simply to say, in reference to it, "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Nevertheless, we not only may, but should, diligently interrogate the sacred record of revealed truth, to learn all that has been communicated respecting the nature and character of this regenerating work which the Divine Spirit produces in the human heart.

When the Saviour so earnestly and emphatically declares, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," he also, and at the same time (John iii., 18-21), explains the reason of this necessity: "*because their deeds were evil.*" And the context clearly shows that he uses the phrase *evil deeds*, to embrace the lack of faith in him, the love of darkness, the dislike of wholesome reproof, and in short, the existence of evil thoughts and improper feelings as well as evil conduct. And not only here

in this particular place, but throughout the Scriptures the doctrine of regeneration—the imperative need, the indispensable requirement of the new birth, is founded upon the declared and obvious fact that men are dead, mournfully “dead in trespasses and in sins.” It is the moral suicide which every individual man has willfully and woefully perpetrated upon himself, which renders his regeneration absolutely necessary. Being morally and spiritually dead, “shall he live again?” Yes, he may, for that is the blessed gospel message delivered to the world by the Son of God, who is himself “the resurrection and the life.”

Owing to the prevalent view of original sin which has so long held sway in Christendom, that its penalty as well as its depravity remained uncanceled and impending in vengeful terror over every man’s soul, theologians have taught and Christians have believed that the doctrine of the new, the spiritual birth, implied that our first natural birth brought us necessarily into a state of moral death, and placed us upon the very threshold of life in an attitude inimical to God, and obnoxious to his burning indignation. Hence obtains so generally the vague, anomalous, unscriptural and unreasonable notion that infants, though dying in earliest

infancy, still need to fit them for admission into Heaven, the internal Spiritual work of regeneration before the laboring breath should leave their little bodies.

Now, if we could see any necessity for such anomalous, extra-Christian, and special intervention of the Holy Spirit to prepare departing infant souls for peaceful and blissful meeting with "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who has so loved them as to give his only begotten Son to die for them, we should not stagger at the idea. We could readily believe, and do verily believe, that God would do any and all things necessary to the complete salvation of those whom he has given to Christ. For "none can pluck them out of his hand." But if the views respecting the nature, purpose, and extent of the Atonement which we have already presented, be accepted as correct and satisfactory, then it is clear that there is no necessity whatever for the special regeneration of a dying infant. And if the views just above presented in regard to the nature, purpose, and effects of regeneration be well founded on the teaching of Christ respecting the necessity of the new-birth, then, of course, there is no place for that *special* work of the Spirit in those who have, as yet, committed no deeds whatever either good or

evil. They have no moral character on which the Spirit can operate. The little fleeting soul which Christ has redeemed unto God, simply escapes the pollutions of this world and goes to develop its moral character in the Paradise of God, where sin can never stain, because there the Tempter can never enter.

With regard to such passages of Scripture as John iii., 3, 5, 36, and the like, we may safely remark that if they were ever intended by the Lord to apply to and include infants, then it follows irresistibly that no infant ever has been, or ever can be saved; because no infant is possessed of the mental faculties which capacitate and enable any one to "believe on the Son of God." John Calvin is therefore indubitably correct in saying of such passages of Holy Writ: "Christ is not speaking of the general guilt in which all the descendants of Adam are involved, but only threatening the despisers of the gospel, who proudly and obstinately reject the grace which is offered to them; and this has nothing to do with infants."*

The apostle Paul distinctly teaches, (Gal. iii., 14), as does the whole New Testament, that "we receive the promise of the Spirit

through faith." Without faith, therefore, it would seem clear that neither infants nor anyone else can receive the Spirit, as He must be received and cherished by all self-destroyed men who are ever reclaimed to the life everlasting. It therefore necessarily follows, that the peculiar work of the regenerating Spirit is not necessary to any but such as have died morally through self-willed suicide. To the infant incapable of faith, as to the believing adult, Christ Jesus, in the eternal efficacy of his atonement "for the sin of the whole world," "is made unto us by God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i., 30.) And in this relation Christ Jesus ever remains true and unchanged towards every son and daughter of Adam until each one, of his own free will, discards the Saving Friend and refuses his gracious reign. (Hosea, xiii., 9; Prov. xiii., 13; Gen. iv., 7; John v., 40.)

To be extricated from the deplorable state of rebellion and enmity to God into which all adults have willfully fallen, and to be led back by the Spirit of Divine grace, and brought again under willing subjection to "the law of life in Christ Jesus," is what we understand our Saviour to mean by being regenerated or "born again." Under the ransoming virtue and saving power of the Cross,

every one was, at the first birth, born right in spite of inherited depravity; but every one who lives to forfeit that imputed righteousness, "must be born again." The sinning soul so brought back, by grace through faith, is restored to all the rights and privileges of that justification wrought out for all, once-for-all, by Him who is All-in-all.

If this exposition and view of our Lord's declarations to Nicodemus be not correct, where would be the significancy of his phrase "*born again*"? Is it not obviously intended to put the second birth in logical and grammatical apposition with the *first birth* understood and implied in the sentence? And does not the whole context show that the *second* birth is necessary, simply because the gracious rights and privileges of the *first* birth had become forfeited through actual sin, through "*evil deeds*"?

We are happy to find that our views in regard to this grave and interesting matter respecting the regeneration of the souls of infants, have been quite nearly entertained and recently advocated by that learned and able author, Dr. William Anderson, of Glasgow, Scotland. If we had the space to spare, we should very gladly insert here several pages from the second edition of his work on Regeneration. But we must content our-

selves with referring our readers to pp. 79-81; of that highly entertaining and instructive work. The following extract is there given from "*Lectures on Divine Sovereignty*," etc., by the eminent Dr. Payne: "In the full sense of the term Regeneration, the sense in which it is used in reference to an adult, comprehending the whole of that moral change which has been described, infants do not need, and are, indeed, incapable of regeneration. In infants there are no mistaken apprehensions of divine things to be corrected; no actually unholy affections towards them to be subdued and removed; for, in the mind of an infant there are, in reference to these things, *no* apprehensions, and *no* affections of any description. As far as they need regeneration, they are regenerated." *

Rev. J. T. Tucker, in his little work entitled "Christ's Infant Kingdom" (p. 19), presents an argument to favor his conception of infant conversion and sanctification, which we will quote here because it appears to us conclusive against that notion, held in common by so many good and learned men of all evangelical denominations. He says: "But now, if God can graciously fit a child

* The reference is to p. 350, of Dr. Payne's late work.

so early to die, why can he not fit it to live as well, by communicating to it, just as early, an equally effective impulse towards holiness, which it shall never lose amid all after-assaults of wickedness? Why may he not so put a young soul into the moulds of his Spirit, as that it shall no more have the imprint fade out, if continuing in the world, than if removed to heaven? Is the one continually done, and the other not possible to be done at all? If the dying infant can be regenerated for heaven, cannot the living infant be regenerated for this world?"

Now this strikes our mind as a sound and logical argument. But so far from supporting the theory it was intended to subserve, it only confirms our previous impression that the prevalent idea of the dying infant being regenerated, is utterly erroneous. The fact is, as we all see and learn from observation and experience, that God does not regenerate the souls, in infancy, of any who live to adult age. And the theory and practice of "Confirmation" proves that no pedobaptist church practicing that rite, supposes that the souls of those who live are ever regenerated while in their infantile state. And if we never see it so in a single case that survives infancy, what shadow of ground is there for concluding that all or any dying in

infancy are regenerated? It must be that Dr. Payne and we are right in holding that the dying infant needs no regeneration. "As far as they need regeneration, they are regenerated." Christ is their righteousness, and He is all-sufficient.

Dr. Anderson, who holds the *privation* theory respecting Original Sin, remarks in connection with the above extract from Dr. Payne, with reference to the need of the Spirit's connection to infant minds: "I am not curious to inquire when this connection may be established. Of this only am I certain, that it is not effected by either Popish, or Prelatic, or any other sort of water Baptism." And on the next following page of his book he says: "I only remark additionally here, that, on the supposition of my being shut up to the alternative, which I have no apprehension I shall ever be, of rejecting the doctrine of the necessity of Regeneration for infants, or of admitting, that any one whosoever that dies in childhood may possibly be subjected to eternal misery, I would unhesitatingly adopt the former."

While, then, Dr. Anderson does not exactly agree with Dr. Payne and us in the opinion that infants are "incapable of regeneration" and without necessity for it, it

will readily be perceived that his only difficulty and hesitancy, springs out of his partiality for that farfetched and fanciful theory of original sin, known as the *privation* theory. And though this *privation* view of original sin numbers among its adherents such highly celebrated and noble names as President Edwards, De-Moulin, Howe, Bellamy, Russell, Hodge, Harris and Gilbert, besides many others of scarcely inferior distinction; still we are bold to assert that the theory carries fallacy patent upon its very face. For how can original sin, the innate depravity of human nature, be the direct result of the *withdrawal* of God's Holy Spirit from man, when it is so clearly apparent, and so distinctly and repeatedly announced in Scripture that the whole Godhead was present and active in accomplishing the great, benevolent work of the Atonement. In the whole scheme of human salvation we are told that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Cor. v., 19.) And from the beginning, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Christ himself, the Divine Man, the Almighty Atoner for the sins of the whole world, was "the Godhead bodily," and the

compassionate Redeemer of sinners. What sense or reason can there possibly be in that view which claims that God, in the very act of giving his Son in sacrifice for man, withdrew his Holy Spirit?

God did not withdraw his Holy Spirit from Adam, for he is not indirectly, any more than directly the author of sin and its consequent depravity. But Adam by virtue of the free-will power with which he was endowed by his Creator, wantonly and sinfully chose to eject and to cast away the Holy Spirit from his own heart, and thereby to corrupt and debase himself and his whole progeny. From the awful rebellion and shocking catastrophe in Eden down to the present time, man has very evidently had the power in his own hands to destroy himself, but in no sense or way is he able to recover and save himself.

The "Privation theory" just as clearly makes God the author of sin as any other false theory that has ever been promulgated, because He, as any other moral agent, is undoubtedly responsible for any and every evil which he could consistently prevent and does not. Our view of the matter is simply this: that according to the all-wise scheme of Deity in making man a morally responsible being, it was inconsistent and inexpedi-

ent, if not impossible in accordance with such scheme, for God to interpose arbitrarily his absolute power to force man to act otherwise than he chose to act. To have reduced the moral creature to a mere physical automatic machine, would obviously have defeated the very ends of his creation. Man, through the willful and wanton perversion and prostitution of his high mental powers, voluntarily chose to transgress the Divine command, and thereby became and continues to be the wicked author of his own sins. For this, he is none the less guilty because God has graciously provided an antidote and effectual cure for human sin. He is, indeed, only the more guilty if he willfully and wantonly "continues in sin that grace may abound."

Not only did God not withdraw his Holy Spirit from man, but from that eventful day when the Lord God came in the cool of the evening to clothe and comfort, as well as to rebuke and pronounce sentence on the hapless fallen pair, has his Holy Spirit stood knocking at every sentient mind and heart pleading for readmission. And as the first man's sin and death commenced in the act of ejecting the Spirit from his heart and doubting God, so every other man's sin and moral death has its source in some one first act of

disobedience to conscience and to God, and in his then persistently and wickedly keeping the door of his heart and conscience firmly closed against the Spirit, while he goes on in a willful course of rebellion.

The abstract principle of sin we may suppose to be coetaneous with the very first creation, and the possibility of it inseparable, for aught that we know, from the very condition of a created being endowed with will, since we find some among the first, highest, and brightest of created beings falling into that ungodly state and becoming therein wholly devilish. The operation of the principle of sin, we may imagine to be somewhat similar to what would take place in the physical world, if a planet were to break loose from its centripetal influences and obeying only the centrifugal forces, should through all eternity continue to fly further and still further away from its proper place in the cosmos. In the moral world, sin is the lawless centrifugal flight of the soul away from God. But the cross of Christ, having through the Divine goodness and mercy been erected from eternity, sweeps with its magnetic centripetal power throughout all immensity, and arresting in their mad career the hell-bent souls of such as will pause to look and live, sets them to revolving

in orbits of love and obedience around itself as the Central Sun of all God's universe.

It has been well said that, "Sin is a debt, and also a disease: the debt needs a ransom, the disease a cure." * The Atonement of Christ in its external justification, and its internal regeneration, meets all the necessities and conditions of the case. The external work we have already sufficiently considered in its relations to infant salvation; and on the internal, with reference to the topic in hand, we will only remark further here, that regeneration being an internal work, requires the consent of the human soul. In some mysterious way, not revealed, God arouses man's deadened conscience to her duty, which directly leads to the voluntary unbar-ring of the heart and to the glad and grateful reception of the Holy Comforter, who proceeds to quicken, renew, and regenerate the soul which had been dead in its own trespasses and sins. We only know from Scripture, that the blessed work is achieved by the Spirit's receiving of the things of Christ and shewing them unto us. (John xvi., 14-15.) This is obviously a kind of work wholly unsuited to the incapacity of an infant's mind.

* "Birke's *Diff. of Belief*," p. 179.

The communication of the life of God to men spiritually dead, is the greatest of all mysteries and the standing miracle of all ages. How absurd and impious must be the profane thought that seeks to reduce this mighty miracle to any system of magical means! Sacramental conjurations are most clearly the very opposite of the idea that Jesus Christ conveyed, touching the subject of regeneration, when he compared it to the movement of the invisible wind and said, "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

CHAPTER VII.

FAITH.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." *Acts xvi.*, 31.

"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." *Mark ii.*, 10 ; *Luke v.*, 24.

Infants cannot believe. Does it follow that they are not saved? By no means. Yet the Scriptures say, "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (*Heb. xi.*, 6.) "The just shall live by faith." (*Heb. x.*, 38.) "Justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (*Rom. iii.*, 28.) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (*Rom. v.*, 1.) "By grace are ye saved through faith." (*Eph. ii.*, 8.) "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (*Gal. iii.*, 26.)

These are quite sufficient, though they are but a few of the very many texts that unequivocally declare the indispensable necessity of faith having its appropriate part to

bear in the matter of man's salvation by Christ. So full and explicit, indeed, are the Scriptures on this point, that quite a large proportion of Christendom show by their religious rites and ceremonies, that they deem the presence of faith in some way or another essential even to the salvation of their infants. Recognizing the obvious fact that their little ones cannot believe, they seek to supply in their behalf, some sort of vicarious faith, as the faith of pious parents, or that of baptismal sponsors, or of both parents and sponsors. Now, while all such unwarrantable practices bear striking testimony to the fact that faith is clearly set forth in Scripture as a leading and vitally important element in the Divine scheme for man's conversion to God, they at the same time prove conclusively that those who resort to such unauthorized expedients, most egregiously misconceive the true Scriptural foundation on which rests the salvation of infants. And it proves more: it proves that they lack clear Scriptural conceptions of the nature, relative place, and proper functions of faith under the Divine economy of redemption through Christ. We should gratefully cherish and most highly appreciate any and every instrumentality and means, both internal and external, which God sanctifies and employs in

the work of our salvation. But the means must never, in any degree whatever, be put in the place of the Master. Not faith, not sacraments, not penance, not prayer, not preaching, not penitence, not love, not obedience, not anything in Heaven or earth or all God's universe, but Christ only, is the Saviour of sinners.

The gross and wide-spread prostitution of the sacred ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which took place in the early ages of the Christian Church, gradually led on to the substitution of sacramental works for sanctified personal faith. At length came the violent, but necessary reaction. In the sixteenth century a mighty struggle was made to revive and restore spiritual religion to the Church, where it had been smothered and crushed out by an unholy combination of Pagan and Judaistic rites and ceremonies. The effort then made, though but partially successful, was highly gratifying and immensely beneficial. Owing to the violent reaction, however, which then began, many Protestant preachers and writers have run into the extreme of treating and presenting faith as though it were itself the Saviour.

If faith in all cases is absolutely necessary to salvation, then it is obvious that infants cannot be saved; and Dr. Watts' theory of

their utter annihilation would be, revolting as it is, the most consolatory view left open to us. But, thanks be to God who gives us the victory in all truth! the Bible does not set forth faith, but Christ as the Saviour of men. What says it? "Being justified freely by his grace *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" (Rom. iii., 24.) "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv., v.) "Much more then, being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath *through him.*" (Rom. v., 9.) "Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life *by Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (Rom. v., 21.)

God exacts of all souls obedience, service, and worship, according to the measure of power and grace given to each. The whole spirit and drift of the gospel, and especially the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv., 14-30), teach the principle that our Lord explicitly enunciates in Luke xii., 47, 48, that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." The faculty of faith, like all the other faculties, capacities and powers of the whole man, is to be consecrated and used for the service and glory of God. Owing to the peculiar character and power of faith, gospel truth has been specially addressed to this faculty. And the whole gos-

pel revelation addresses itself specially to the mind and heart of the fully developed, and therefore personally responsible creature whose high gifts and faculties, under the baneful guidance of sin, have all developed into a state of active enmity to God and his truth. And since the purpose of the gospel is to reclaim that which is lost, comparatively little is to be found in it directly relating to other beings. Hence we have in Scripture but few allusions, and those few of an incidental character, to infants in their state of innocence as redeemed by the blood of Christ, and to the elect angels who have kept their first estate.

On the faith of the text above cited, we maintain, then, that God does not hold the infant responsible for the exercise and consecration of a faculty which it does not yet possess. And most assuredly it is not enjoined, for it is not possible that the parent or any other person should believe for the infant of whom belief is not exacted, and in whom it is neither necessary nor possible. The arm of God, in its power to save, is not shortened by the limitations of man's poor faculties. Yet, in the case of the reprobate, God has seen fit to require that his faculty of mind by which faith is exercised—that master faculty and mightiest power of the soul,

—shall be rectified in its attitude towards truth, and re-adjusted in all its functions, so that under the influence of its right action, the whole heart and mind may be brought back into willing subjection to the righteous laws of Divine truth. By faith we lay hold of, look to, and receive “Christ our righteousness.”

If men were free from the debasing, blinding power of sin, love as the mainspring of holy action and the essence of the moral law, would doubtless have been set forth as the preëminent condition of God’s favor. The moral depravity of man, involving spiritual blindness and mental delusion, and the functional nature of faith, obviously constitute the reasons why the more prominency is given to faith in the economy of salvation. Man’s first, most pressing necessity is to find his way back to the Saviour whom, on arriving at the stage of moral responsibility, he willfully disdained and forsook. Christ Jesus is that Saviour, and faith *in* him is therefore the prerequisite to salvation *by* him, for every one who has ever renounced allegiance to him.* Saving faith in Christ is but the hearty recognition of him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of lost men, and of his atonement as the only all-sufficient ground of pardon for human sin. For such faith im-

plies full assent on the part of the believer, not only to the truth of the vicarious suffering of Christ for the sin of the world, but also the heinous guilt of sin, and the justice of God in punishing it. It is furthermore entire trust in Christ Jesus as the eternal King, Priest, and Prophet of his people. It is therefore in its effects a conscious entering of the repentant believing soul into fellowship with the Redeemer, and implicit reliance on him for grace and acceptance with God the Father. In short, we must necessarily "believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," before we can learn to love and trust him.

Doubt, distrust, or question as to the salvation of little infants who cannot disobey,—cannot sin willfully, would never have found place in the minds of men but for the fact that erroneous human systems of theology thrust the question upon the world. And we have all too long neglected the duty of investigating the subject thoroughly on its pure gospel grounds. There is a sweet and beautiful harmony and perfect consistency in all of God's truth, which always comes out to view more clearly as we come more perfectly to understand it. To press any one branch or doctrine of the divine truth into an extreme position, is inevitably to throw into

back-ground and cover with shadow, other important branches of truth and doctrine. While, on the other hand, to apprehend correctly, and to place appropriately any one doctrine of Scripture in the symmetrical system to which it belongs, at once enables us to obtain fuller and fairer views of all cognate doctrines. There is, therefore, far more than mere idle interest involved in the thorough study and investigation of this subject of infant salvation. That they are not, and can not be saved through the instrumentality of faith is obvious; and that they are not and cannot be saved through the mummery of magical sacraments is equally clear, for such an idea is palpably at war with any just conception of a divine, holy, spiritual religion. That kind of operation which by its very nature is necessarily limited to the flesh,—as must be the case with infants and idiots, in whom there is no mental conduit,—is of course impotent to reach the spirit; but that which begins in the immortal spirit, may through the mysterious nature and majesty of spirit and mind, come to reach and sanctify the flesh.

There is no evidence whatever,—not even the slightest intimation,—given anywhere in Scripture, that God has, in the processes of His holy religion, reversed that uniform law

of nature by which the inertia of matter is overcome only through force of mind. According to all the analogies of nature applicable to the case, in our mind or spiritual nature must begin that initiative force or motion which is designed to bring the whole complex human nature into obedience and subjection to "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which sets us free from "the law of sin and death." This is the true science of the Christian religion as it is of all sentient nature; and obviously no superstitious use of the sacred ordinances, or other magical arts can ever nullify or reverse this fundamental law of God.

The will, which first perpetrates wickedness, must first, in the order of conversion unto righteousness, be reached and set right by grace through faith in Christ. The human will is the masterful engine of our intellectual and moral nature; let it, by grace, be switched off upon the right track and it carries its whole train of life and conduct Heavenward. But you had as well attempt to make the rearmost box-car the motive power of a railroad train, as to hope by sacramental affusions upon the body, to bring the moral and spiritual nature into dutiful subjection to the Lord of life and glory. How passing strange it is that so large a por-

tion of the Bible-reading world persist in the futile operation of "putting the cart before the horse!" John the Baptist, Christ himself, and the Apostles, all preached to men and bade them repent and believe, before they baptized them.

That these systems of theology which seek to compass the salvation of infants by means of any such expedients as those to which we have just alluded, are, to say the least of them, radically different from that system which Christ and his apostles taught, is clear. The fact that such wide inherent difference really exists between the systems,—(the apostolic, and post-apostolic),—is as clear and conclusive as any historical fact or moral problem can possibly be rendered. The proof of this assertion is in the striking and indisputable fact, that the question of the ecclesiastical relations of infants, or of the mode and possibility of their salvation in the absence of capacity on their part to believe, never arose in a single instance under the ministry of our Lord and his apostles.

Now, human nature, human feelings, affections, desires, hopes and fears are pretty much the same in all ages and among all peoples. And if there had been the slightest ground for question or doubt, in regard

to either the salvation of their little ones, or any proper ecclesiastical relations for them, under the system unfolded by Jesus Christ and the inspired founders of the Christian church, do we not know that anxious parents would have propounded over and again, searching questions touching the matter, both to the Master who, as we have seen, so often evinced his tender regard for little children, and to his apostles, who went about preaching the gospel and planting churches? Yet, no such inquiry appears ever to have been made; no such question ever started in that day. That, then, which has given rise to such vexing questions, and started such strange doubts, must obviously be "another gospel."

Paul preached salvation by grace through faith, more distinctly and powerfully than it has ever since been preached; yet no church or individual ever communicated with him respecting doubt or perplexity of mind as to whether or not their little ones dying in infancy, could be saved under the system of theology taught by him. Do we not know that silence on the subject is attributable simply to the fact that those who heard Paul's preaching, and who read his letters, had no misgivings whatever respecting the safety of their little children. They under-

stood perfectly that he preached and taught the necessity of believing to men and women capable of exercising faith. Just as John the Baptist exhorted those who came to his baptism to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" and James charged his brethren to do the works that fidelity to Christ required at their hands. Nobody then understood any of these admonitions as being addressed to irresponsible children; nor did any, in that age, set themselves to contriving expedients for adapting the Gospel teachings and ordinances to the condition and circumstances of those for whom they were manifestly not designed. Least of all did any one then dream of supplementing the efficacy of Christ's atonement with the initiatory or memorial ordinances of his church.

The atonement of Christ is possessed of a vital and supernaturally active power of itself. And while it constitutes the essence of the Gospel proclamation, and utilizes the instrumentality of men in preaching it, and of the church in preserving and cherishing the remembrance of it among men, through the symbolical ordinances committed to her keeping; still, above and beyond all these, it exerts an independent and stupendous energy, all its own, through the peculiar, mysterious ministry of the Holy Spirit. But

for this blessed internal ministration of the Holy Ghost, faith itself would, at best, be but an ordinary act of the mind, unaccompanied by that life-giving power which produces the regeneration and purification of the soul.

It by no means follows from the subsequent internal work of the Holy Spirit, including the gift of faith itself, that the atonement was incomplete, and did not fully reinstate man in the favor and grace of God. The whole gospel proclamation is based upon the fact that Christ did make a sufficient, complete and accepted atonement for the sin of the whole world. All the subsequent work of God's grace in man's behalf is simply necessary because the weak and fallible creature that Christ redeemed always needs His upholding hand, and the guiding, encouraging, comforting and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, to enable him to live the life and run the race set before him. According to this beneficent economy of grace under the Divine government, God's people are assured "as thy days, so shall thy strength be." "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." That being justified by his grace, we should be made "heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The Bible plainly informs us that those who shall fail to be saved under the atonement for sin made by Christ and freely offered to the world, are simply those who themselves will not to be saved. And it by no means follows from this, that those saved are saved because they simply will to be saved; for "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix., 16.) He, however, who wills to reject the mercy, most certainly cannot be saved. "How shall they escape if they neglect so great salvation?" But have we not here the strongest grounds on which to rest our belief that all other human souls will be, and are saved by the atoning blood of Christ, except only those expressly excluded? And from this view of the question, which seems a fair one, the presumption is strong, nay, irresistible, that all infants dying in infancy, are certainly saved, "justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." For we have the assurance that "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all;" "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace."

The sacrifice of Christ having effectually expiated the offense of original sin, God as

freely imputes the righteousness and merits of the Redeemer to little unoffending babes, as to repentant believing adults. If the repentant prodigal returning to his father's home, meets a hearty welcome, who can suppose that the innocent child that has never gone away and squandered his living, shall ever be ejected from that blessed home!

It is clear that from all eternity God purposed, by means of the atonement of Christ, to justify infants without faith, and repentant sinners, through faith. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke xii., 48.) The exaction, in all respects and cases is "according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii., 12.) "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." (Ps. cxlv., 17.)

CHAPTER VIII.

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.

“The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.—*Ps.* xcvi., 1, 2.

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”—*Matt.* xxii., 14; xx., 16.

Whether or not we shall be able to explain and reconcile, satisfactorily, the universal salvation of infants with the doctrine of predestination and election, we are bound to accept this doctrine; for nothing is more distinctly and emphatically enunciated in the holy Book. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom., viii., 29, 30.) This Scripture clearly and unequivocally represents God as exercising discrimination and selection, with respect to the human family and the destiny of souls. And this act of

Deity is, in Scripture, termed *election*, and the favored objects of it are called the "elect."

In Rom., ix.-xi., and Ephe., i., and in various other parts of the Bible, this doctrine is also quite as distinctly taught. This election is also very clearly represented as being made according to the "foreknowledge" and determinate "predestination" of God. Let it be observed, too, that the "elect" are declared to be "called," "justified," and "glorified." "What shall we then say to these things?" Why, that they are most surely true. And "let God be true, but every man a liar;" "for true and righteous are his judgments."

The question remains, however, as to the way in which, and the extent to which this Sovereign decree affects the whole class of irresponsible infants who depart this life in their infancy. Whether the gracious Disposer of all events, in decreeing their early death, decrees likewise the eternal salvation of all of them, is not explicitly revealed in Scripture. It is a matter of inference. But on a full and fair examination of all that is directly and incidentally revealed touching infant salvation, taken together with all that appears in the sacred record relative to the specific doctrine of election, the inference, we

think, will be as clear as it is gratifying that all are saved.

In Part I, of this little work, we presented ample proof of the fact that God does certainly save the souls of at least some infants ; and the child of the very wicked and reprobate Jeroboam, as well as that of David, the servant of God. We also saw that he kept in hand and restored the life of the little child of the heathen widow of Sarepta, as well as that of the child of the pious Shunammite. We have since, in the progress of our investigations, had occasion to notice many of the very numerous texts of Scripture which unmistakably assert that every lost soul is the author of its own destruction ; that all such are in the fatally willful position of the envious and blaspheming Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, to whom Paul said, "Ye judge yourselves not worthy of eternal life." (Acts xiii., 46.) Then, since all men who resist not persistently and finally the Spirit of saving grace are saved, and infants are incapable of committing the fatal sin of rejecting Christ, and some infants,—children of wicked parents as well as children of pious parents,—are certainly saved, as we have seen, are we not necessarily brought to the conclusion that *all* infants, dying in infancy, are most certainly saved ?

Nor do the Scriptures leave us at any loss to account for the principle of grace on which all infants are eternally saved, since their inherited sin has been blotted out in the atoning blood of the spotless Lamb of God, who "put away sin" and re-opened heaven to a lost and wrecked world. Need we again remind the reader that the proof of this last assertion, in its broadest and most unlimited sense, is found in those numerous texts of Scripture, many of which have been repeatedly quoted by us, to the effect that Christ made atonement for the sin of *the whole world*. In the unrestricted, universal offer of the gospel to all men ; and in that other striking, most significant fact, that there is not the slightest intimation, the faintest hint to be found in Scripture, that any soul was ever condemned and consigned to perdition on account of original sin.

But again, a full and fair examination of those Scripture texts which have reference to the matter of election to eternal salvation, will plainly show that they pertain not to infants or any other irresponsible beings, but to those only who are morally responsible. The very word *election* is antithetical in its signification, and in its Scriptural connection implies its opposite idea, *reprobation* ; and the Scriptures abundantly teach that God's

reprobation, by preterition or otherwise, falls only on such as willfully reject him and despise truth as it is in Christ. We are expressly informed that it is "for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The descriptive terms here used, have plainly no application whatever to irresponsible beings. Such terms can apply only to those who prostitute their faculty of faith to the vicious office of disbelieving, for which atrocity God sends them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, which insures their damnation, since it is the truth only that can make men free.

In Rom. viii., 28, 29, Paul speaks of the elect as "them that love God," as those who are capable of being "conformed to the image of his Son." In Matt. xxiv., 22-24, and Mark xiii., 20-22, our Lord terms those "elect" whom he represents as *capable* of being "seduced," were it "possible," by the "great signs and wonders" of "false prophets." In Col. iii., 12-17, Paul exhorts those whom he terms "the elect of God," in such a manner as shows plainly that he had reference to responsible professing Christians, members of the church. In

Tit. i., 1, he speaks of "the *faith* of God's elect." Peter addresses those whom he terms "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto *obedience*," etc. 1 Pet. i., 2. Again he speaks of "the church* at Babylon" as "elect," 1 Pet. v., 13. In Acts ix., 15, Paul is himself spoken of as a chosen vessel. And he is addressing the church at Thessalonica when he speaks of "knowing" their "election of God," 1 Thess. i., 4. Peter in speaking of election, 2 Pet. i., 10, is also addressing the church, persons who have the capacity to "give diligence to make their calling and election sure" in the doing of the things which he enjoins.

These texts of Scripture all go to show that the election to eternal life, through the *prevenient* Sovereign grace of God, *seems to take effect and operate on those developed faculties of the human mind and heart which appertain to persons capable of receiving or rejecting gospel truth.* It does not follow from this, however, that the spirits of men are sanctified in order to their election. They are elected in order to their sanctification and salvation. Nevertheless, we may discern from the above-cited Scrip-

* The whole Gospel record shows that a Christian Church is an organized body of baptized *professed* believers in Christ.

ture, that personal election in conformity with the foreknowledge and predestination of God, is a work or operation of such a nature that the Holy Spirit accomplishes it in the mysterious conversion and regeneration of morally responsible beings. And this must necessarily be so, "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. ii., 13, 14).

The only passage of Scripture that we can call to mind which would seem to conflict with this view of the nature, relative place and operative character of the divine elective grace, is found in Rom. ix., 11. But we are satisfied that upon due examination, this will be found to constitute no exception to the general tenor of Scripture as above quoted.

Professor Charles Hodge, in his able commentary on Romans, is no doubt correct in saying that, "With the eighth chapter the discussion of the plan of salvation, and of its immediate consequences was brought to a close. The consideration of the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews commences with the ninth and extends to the end of the eleventh." (p. 368.) And it

is true, as Arminians contend in reference to this portion of Scripture, that "in the interpretation of any instrument of writing, it is a universally admitted rule that it should be construed with reference to the subject of which it treats."* Yet with this allowance, we do not see that Armenians gain anything, so far as the *principle* of election is in dispute between themselves and Calvinists. When we read: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth," it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the Apostle here teaches that the election spoken of is perfectly sovereign, and that the *ground* on which the choice is made is not in men, but in the sovereign purpose of God.

So Tholuck, as quoted by Hodge (in note, p. 389), allows the teaching of the passage to be: "That as God, without recognizing any claims, committed the external theocracy and many advantages to whom he pleased, so also now he commits the internal to whom he will, or allows whom he will to enter it."

We, therefore, are here concerned with the passage only for the purpose of pointing out the fact that it refers to persons who were

*Bledsøe's Theodicy, p. 217.

destined to live and grow up to man's estate.

Even restricting its signification to the temporal advantages which the birthright conferred on Jacob, yet "the purpose of God according to election," dating back before the period of their birth, did not take effect in fruition until the two brothers arrived at maturity. Then we know how the wit of Rebecca, the infirmity of Isaac, the pliancy of Jacob and the recklessness of Esau, all conspired to accomplish that which had been decreed from the beginning. We have here, then, a very striking illustration going to show that God's elective grace works to the consummation of his eternal purposes, in the case of responsible beings, by overruling and utilizing their developed faculties. Here, as everywhere, the means are decreed as well as the end. The efficient as well as the final causes are in God's hand. And we have abundantly shown from Scripture that when the end is the election to life of responsible beings, the means are, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the renewing of such persons in their faculties of mind and heart. We read not, therefore, in the Scriptures of elect infants, because they possess not those faculties on which discriminating grace operates. And the very fact that the Scriptures nowhere speak of elect infants—

a term which implies the rejection and reprobation of some that stand in contrast to the elect ones—proves conclusively that all infants, without exception, are of one class and of the same spiritual condition.

We do read of “elect angels” and know that they constitute a class in contrast with the fallen angels. We also read of elect saints, “who are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation,” and we know that they stand in contrast to the opposite class of human beings who “deny the faith” and “have pleasure in unrighteousness.” It is surely then, not without deep significance that we never, in Scripture, hear of elect infants. It must be simply because in that case there is no contrasted, no dissimilar class,—*no reprobate infants!*

Let us not be misunderstood in what we have said above, as to the Spirit’s accomplishing the work of God’s elective grace, through its sanctifying operation on the developed faculties of the human mind and heart. We by no means intend by that assertion to concede that God, in his omniscient foreknowledge, ever sees any inherent virtue in man, for, or on account of which, he predestinates and elects him to eternal life. No virtue, whatever, has poor fallen man except what he may receive as a free gift from God. This

truth does not hinder us, however, from perceiving that God lays hold of the natural faculties of matured minds, and uses them for the purpose of working out his gracious will in the human soul. We think we have made it clear in these pages, that God's sovereign, predestinated, elective grace takes place and consummates its peculiar work in some, to us, mysterious way that has immediate and direct connection with the awful responsibilities of man's own free will. Nevertheless, we fully agree with what Calvin has so forcibly and neatly expressed, where he says, "The Lord precedes the unwilling that he may will, and follows the willing that he may not will in vain." For it is true that while the power to will is from nature, to will what is good is from grace. And without the direct and constant assistance of God, we should be, "not only unable to conquer, but even to contend." Because the fall upset the integrity and true freedom of man's will, as it disordered all his other faculties. And therefore, "the human will obtains not grace by liberty, but liberty by grace."

The views of the doctrine of election which we have presented above, seem to be very fully and clearly supported by such passages of Scripture as the following, among many

more that might easily be cited to the same effect: "Therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, *especially of those that believe.*" (1 Tim. iv., 10.) "As many as were ordained, [rather, *disposed*, the word is *τεταγμενοι*], to eternal life believed." (Acts xiii., 48.) And then: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*" (2 Thess. ii., 13.) By Acts xiii., 48, let it be observed that while none were chosen to "eternal life" on account of their "belief," none were in that place, at least, spoken of as "ordained,"—*disposed*,—"to eternal life" but such as could and did *believe*. And in 2 Thess. ii., 13, it is equally plain that such as were "from the beginning chosen," were so chosen "*through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*"—through the exercise of a faculty which belongs only to developed minds. The Spirit, then, sanctifies that in man which has developed into an unsanctified state, and which is yet capable of exercising faith,—that which is responsible, and yet helpless without the supernatural aid of the Divine Spirit.

It is no part of our business to discuss, in this little work, the intricate doctrine of

election, nor, indeed, any other doctrine, any further than seems necessary to adjust the same fairly to the universal and eternal salvation of infants. We beg the indulgence of the reader, however, while we proceed to submit a few more remarks on the deeply interesting topic now in hand.

Rom. v., 6-11, clearly represents Christ as dying for those who "were yet sinners," and asserts that such "were justified," not by any election, but "by his blood." "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." There is an obvious distinction made here by the Apostle between the "being reconciled," and the "be saved;" though the two operations are clearly connected parts of one whole design and purposed work. Justification is, however, the *primary* blessing, and the "now received atonement," or reconciliation, is the assured *consequence* "by His life," who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. vii., 25.)

This Scripture proves that by the mighty power and vitalizing efficacy of Christ's atonement, man is restored to God's favor and effectually saved in Christ until he willfully forfeits that state by actual transgression of "the law of life in Christ Jesus." (Comp.

Heb. x., 29.) This, owing to the existing state of his enfeebled, fallen, depraved nature, and his sinful surroundings here, he is sure to do, and that just as soon as he is able to do anything of his own free will. But the tender mercy and long-suffering of God, for Christ's sake, still follows up the contumacious sinner, warning him, ever and anon, by the whisperings of conscience, and by the varied providences of God, to turn and come back to Christ: to flee "the wrath to come:" to return to the great loving "Shepherd and Bishop of his soul," and live forever.

Having voluntarily violated "the law of life" and chosen death, man is "dead in trespasses and sins." Therefore, if he ever lives again, spiritually, he must of necessity be born again. "The carnal mind is enmity to God," wherefore it very early in life carries off the soul from God and enthralls it under Satan.

Where God purposes to save, he does for each one, and grants to each his grace according to their several needs. To the infant, incapable of actual transgression, whose fallen and unrighteous state and nature has been atoned for by Christ, pardon, justification and adoption is all that is needed for salvation. The robe of Christ's perfect righteousness, being by God the Father imputed

to such dying infant, covers and saves it eternally. Such souls, without works, are reckoned as righteous for Christ's sake. He is their righteousness, just the same and as completely as he ever becomes the righteousness of him that believes. They are justified by the divine imputation of his blood and accepted in the Beloved. And they experience in the spirit-world, just as adults do, the blessedness referred to in Rom. iv., 6-8. "Blessed is the man [and equally so the child] to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The word "man" here, evidently stands for the genus *homo*.

If the soul that has been redeemed and justified from the penalty due to inborn, original depravity, as a thing in itself inimical to God's holy law and righteous government, lives to maturity in this world, it will inevitably need for its salvation additional supplies of grace. And not only additional supplies of pardoning grace, but grace differently applied. When the moral disease of sin has assumed a different type and form in the soul, and reached a different stage of development, it clearly needs a different treatment. The antidote, by God's infinite goodness, is then applied internally and brought into immediate contact with the seed-bed and germ of the disease. The morally respons-

ible sinner has steeled his heart against the truth, rejected the counsel of God against himself, and spurned the precious blood of atonement. He, therefore, must be converted to God by repentance, faith, and the regenerating, sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit working in him to will and to do of God's good pleasure. His spirit, soul and body having been corrupted by willful actual sin, must be renewed, regenerated and sanctified wholly by the in-working Spirit of God.

But in whatever form or manner God may see fit to present his free, saving grace, man's free rational will having become developed, he must, as a responsible moral agent, make the choice for himself either of accepting or refusing the proffered boon. The Spirit of Divine grace labors, consequently, with the intelligent human spirit, and through His subduing and sanctifying influences, the discarded law of God is re-written in indelible characters upon the defaced tablet of the regenerate human soul.

It is manifest, therefore, that the sovereign principle of election to eternal life, is exerted in the Divine policy of operative and efficient grace, through its mysterious dealings with human free will. Of those from whose hearts the veil of sin and blinding error has been removed, it is said, "we all with open face

beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And again: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." (Rom. xi., 5, 7.) We have seen from Scripture that "the rest were blinded" from the fact, and because "they rejected the counsel of God against themselves" (Luke, vii., 30), and not because they were excluded from the redemption in Christ's atonement, "who is the Saviour of *all* men, especially of those that believe" (1 Tim., iv., 10).

But it is also vastly important to a just comprehension of the matter in hand that we bear in mind the grateful truth, amply revealed in Scripture, that God the Father wills not the death of the sinner. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live?" (Eze. xviii., 23.) "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Eze. xxxiii., 11.) "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count

slackness ; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet., iii., 9.)

From the very day of the dire catastrophe in Eden, God has continued to present himself to man under the double aspect of a just God hating sin, and a great Saviour full of tender mercy for sinners. So the apostle Peter has presented the Saviour to the world : "Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times for you, who through him believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory ; so that your faith and hope are on God" (1 Pet., i., 20, 21). This is likewise the gospel which Paul says "was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. i., 23). And this the principle of elective grace which seems to go along with it ; for Paul says again : "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim., ii., 10).

It is surely a thing of no little importance to see, as far as we may, on what plane of the kingdom of grace, and just whereabout, the sovereignty of God and the free-will of man come to the touch with each other in the matter of man's salvation, though we be

not able to discern the very point of contact, nor the nature of the delicate and mysterious nexus that exists between the two. That God is Sovereign on every plane and place of every kingdom is clear, and that He has chosen to make man a responsible free-will creature is equally clear. That Christ Jesus is in some true Biblical sense the Saviour "of all men," and that God the Eternal Father wills not the death of any, but that "all should turn and live," are grateful, precious truths which the Scriptures clearly and explicitly announce. And well has Dr. John Dick remarked that "We can never be certain that we understand the subject of predestination so well as we understand that God is sincere."*

Let no man, then, feel that he is deserted by that beneficent Being who, in His daily providences, in His constant, unremitting care and protection, as well as in His blessed Gospel, teaches all men to call him Father.

"Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather;
And Adam's sin have swept between the righteous Son
and Father.

Yea, once Immanuel's orphan cry his universe hath
shaken—

It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken'
It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,
That of the lost, no one need use those words of desola-
tion!"

Mrs. Browning.

* Theology, vol. I., p. 375.

CHAPTER IX.

FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

“For I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”—*Mal.* iii., 6.

“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”—*Rom.* xi., 29.

One other doctrine of the Scripture—“The final perseverance of the saints”—remains to be reconciled with our theory of infant salvation. We have agreed that the atonement of Christ worked, *ipso facto*, the pardon and justification and incipient adoption of the whole Adamic race; and, at the same time, that many who live to the age of responsibility are finally condemned and eternally lost. This paradox needs explanation, in view of the fact that Scripture clearly and emphatically assures us that God changes not, and that His gifts and calling are without repentance.

We cannot doubt the final perseverance of God's saints. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” (*Phil.* ii., 13.) We cannot doubt it. “Being confident of this very thing,

that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i., 6.) It is essentially important to observe here, however, that the "good work" which the apostle is confident the Spirit of Grace will "perform until the day of Jesus Christ," is a work "*in you*," and a distinct work from that which Christ has performed and completed *for* you; though the internal is necessarily based on the great prior external work.

It evidently will not do to hold, as many assume to do, that each and every personal sin of God's elect is already, even before they are committed, pardoned and cancelled by the blood of atonement without the grace of sincere repentance. All go astray and commit sin from the earliest period of accountability; and this from the want of saving faith in the truth of God. Then, if their every sin is already cancelled and freely forgiven, unbelief is no sin in such an elect soul, and that soul would be saved equally well without faith. For clearly, belief is not absolutely necessary to any soul in which unbelief is not damning sin. And where the penalty of sin does not attach, there is no absolute need for repentance. The error and absurdity of such an idea is manifest.

We have argued that the infant departing

this life before committing actual, willful, personal sin, is eternally saved because it has been pardoned, justified and accepted by God the Father for Christ's sake. Just as certainly and securely have all such been "kept by the power of God unto salvation," as the adult repentant saint is kept by the same power through faith in Christ. The infant has been kept by the Divine power in the necessary state of pardon, justification and adoption unto the end of its appointed span of life on this earth. It therefore dying in that state departs to God in perfect innocence. It is useless and absurd to inquire as to what might have been the fate or fortunes of such departed infant, if its life had been prolonged in this world of temptation. It is enough to know that it died at God's appointed time, and therefore died in the state and condition appointed to it by God in his dispensation of grace and mercy. It was appointed to salvation, since it was appointed to death in that state of innocence to which pardon, justification, and literal sanctification, or setting apart to God, had attached under "the purchased redemption in Christ Jesus."

Those, however, who live on to years of accountability, have faculties and moral powers developed in them, for the proper,

righteous exercise of which they are responsible to God. These they voluntarily prostitute to the service of sin. They have been born to a probationary existence quite different from that to which the innocent deceased infant was ever subjected, and the Creator, in the course of time, has endowed them with faculties and powers adapted to their entirely different condition of existence here. Conscience has been quickened into life and the will liberated, and all the nascent powers of their nature have been developed into vital activity. And though pardoned and justified by God, on account of Christ's atonement, for the unrighteous and depraved nature with which they came into the world ; still, that fallen and deeply disordered state is the real condition in which they exist. A life of sin and disobedience to God's righteous law is, therefore, inevitable in the case of every soul that lives to years of moral responsibility.

But God, for Christ's sake, having justified and accepted them in that unrighteous, disordered condition, freely proffers to every one the enlightning and supporting Spirit by which, if they accept heartily the grace and cherish it, they may overcome sin and live and "shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his

marvellous light." For so they appropriate and become savingly possessed of the "true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." On the other hand, if man persists in rejecting the Divine Spirit, he inevitably dies in his trespasses and sins; for his mental and moral faculties which time, by the providence of God, has developed in his nature, have not been sanctified and made holy by the internal working of the Spirit of Divine grace. Having by personal sins committed moral suicide, he needs to be born again. This birth, as we have abundantly seen in the preceding chapters, is of the Spirit operating upon faculties capable of receiving Him.

When the developed man comes to believe the truth in Christ and gladly accepts the overtures of mercy, and with all his faculties of body, soul and spirit, embraces the Spirit of sealing, saving grace, he becomes renewed—is born again, regenerated, sanctified and made an "heir to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Having, *with all his faculties developed*, been born again, he can never become *unborn*. Having believed to the sanctifying of the soul, his will, together with all his other faculties, has become sanctified; and though he may fall into egregious sins, under temptation;

though all his other faculties of body and mind may be temporarily seduced away from the love of holiness, and from obedience to God ; yet, whatever his practice may be, his *will* can never again deliberately prefer and choose death. And having, through faith and love, once willingly accepted Christ Jesus as his Prophet, Priest and King, and yielded his soul's salvation to His keeping, he can never afterwards *wish* to withdraw that trust. He may again and again grievously fail in his obedience to Christ, but "His seed remaineth in him," for an internal work has taken place, and the Christ of God is faithful, "he cannot deny himself." And the soul that has ever been truly converted, has, once for all, abandoned "confidence in the flesh," and handed itself over to the keeping of Christ.

Still it is most true that, as Dr. Moore has well expressed it, "The perseverance of the saints is guaranteed, not by their unchangeable love to God, but by His unchangeable love to them, and his eternal purpose and promise in Christ Jesus."* And this Gospel truth seems to be taught with perfect distinctness by the Apostle, where he says, "For if we be dead with Him, we shall also

* Dr. T. V. Moore's "Prophets of The Restoration," p. 385.

live with Him :” “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful ; he cannot deny himself.” (2 Tim. ii., 13.) Which latter verse is much better rendered : “If faithless we, he faithful remains ; to deny himself he is not able.”

The original being : “*εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει. ἀρνήσασθαι ἑαυτὸν οὐδύναται.*”

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word !”

2 Pet. ii., 18-22, has long been one of the chief passages of the Bible on which the believers in the doctrine of “falling from grace” rest that notion. And it must be allowed that the Greek word *ontos*, which occurs in v. 18, of the *Textus Receptus*, rendered in our Authorized Version “*clean*,” gives strong countenance to that view. But the Greek of Griesbach, has the word *oligos* in place of *ontos*, which is sanctioned by Lachman, Tischendorf and Tregelles. This change of words puts quite a different face on the matter, for *oligos* makes the Apostle speak in that place, not of a class of professors who had “*clean* escaped from them who live in error,” and from “the pollutions of the world,” but of persons who had *but a little, not yet fully* effected such escape. And does not the proverbial comparison applied to such persons, in v. 22, also go to prove that the Apostle had refer-

ence only to such as were but externally cleansed—partially reformed? This later, and clearly better exegetical understanding of this passage, may well serve as a key to the proper interpretation of those few other parallel passages of Scripture which have been construed as giving countenance to the doctrine of falling from saving grace.

Let Vinet express for us a fitting comment on the concluding thought of the last paragraph. "Alas," says he, "with a conviction firmly established, with an orthodoxy the most perfect, how many do we see, strangers to true faith, how many skeptical believers, how many who have not doubted the truth of the Scriptures a single day of their life, who read them assiduously, who know them even by heart, and who, notwithstanding all this, do not believe at all! Ah, it is that faith is something else than the product of the intellect; it is that faith is love. *Knowledge may give us convictions; love alone gives us life.**

When we have once made a full and hearty surrender of ourselves to God, he is pledged to save us from ourselves, as well as from the fatal power and final domination of Satan. And through his guiding grace, and the intimate fellowship and communion of Spirit

*Vital Christianity, p. 60.

with spirit, every soul so converted and sanctified, is sooner or later enabled to say with the Apostle Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. i., 12.) From of old, God has said to his people: "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." (Isa. liv., 10.) The New Covenant likewise promises irrevocable pardon to the true Israel of God: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." (Heb. viii., 12.) And we find among the most explicit promises of our dear Lord to his people, the following precious assurances: "I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them unto me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (John x., 28-30.)

"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
He will not—He will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
He'll never—no never—no never forsake!"

“Truth, as it is in Christ,” is intended to reach and renew the fallen creature man, in all his attributes, faculties and powers. Reason, conscience, will, faith, hope, love, all, all that have gone astray and rebelled against God must be converted, set right, sanctified and brought back in filial obedience and faithfulness to their benevolent Creator. All this the very term “religion” expresses in its literal signification, as its Latin original indicates—*religare*, *re-ligatio*, to bind anew or back; tying fast.

The acceptable sacrificial Atonement of the ever-blessed Christ of God, has rendered this complete pardon and perfect renewal of fallen man compatible with the infinite justice and perfect righteousness of God. And from this point of view it is easy to see why the revealed truth is, in the main, addressed to persons of full-blown faculties: and why the Scriptures are so fully and completely adapted to all the requirements of such a being, while so little, comparatively, is directly revealed respecting infants whose faculties are all in a state of mere germinal, inchoate existence. It is quite as unnecessary, as it is impossible, to reach their reason with the truths of revelation. Therefore, under the beneficent government of the Almighty Father of all, that revelation which is meant

for the morally responsible, only touches occasionally and incidentally the irresponsible and the innocent.

We trust we have now made it plain to our readers that, in the case of adults and infants,—the one class equally with the other,—salvation rests upon the same divine principle, viz.: the sovereign decrees of Almighty God, that spring out of, and depend in glorious festoons of saving grace from the Cross of Christ. The principle is only varied in its application to suit the necessities and capacities of all the different recipients, and to bring every power and faculty of each one, whatever they may be, into the unity of the one Saving Spirit. “To whom much has been given, of him much will be required.” God demands his usury on every talent intrusted to man’s stewardship, whether it be one, or whether it be five talents ; whether it be to breathe and cry and die ; or to live to the attainment of the noble capacities and faculties of faith, hope, obedience, and love. All, all must be consecrated and used to the glory of God the giver, who, “according to his own infinite mercy” and justice, “will render to every one according to his deeds.” “So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

To all alike, of every age, class and condition who are saved, God says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. (Isa. xliii., 25.) We have seen that by the fundamental law of his kingdom of grace, all infants living or dying are IN HIM.

In reviewing the ground over which we have traveled in this investigation, we find that we made good the proof in an imposing array of revealed facts from first the Old Testament and then the New, that the souls of all little infants, departing this life in the state of innocency conferred on them by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, are eternally saved. In the next place, we glanced at the doctrine of original sin as it seems to be reflected from the pages of the Bible. We then examined at some length the Scripture doctrine of the Atonement, and found ample ground on which to rest our hope that Christ, who, in behalf of Divine justice, and through amazing love of his creatures, maintained in righteousness his moral government at the cost of his life's blood, embraced the whole human family in his gracious Act of Amnesty by which also propitiation was made for the whole world of sinners.

In establishing the glorious fact that Christ

is himself the oblation, sin-offering, and Saviour—"the way, the truth, and the life"—it became necessary to show that it is a delusive error to attribute to faith, works of repentance, sacraments, or ordinances any meritorious or intrinsic power of salvation. We also directed attention to the very obvious fact that the Divine work of redemption was external to man and wholly independent of human agencies: that God the Father having accepted the atonement made by Christ, sealed his acceptance in the sovereign act of justification: that justification involved pardon and opened the way to adoption; and under this most ample and complete system of salvation, which was consummated in Christ—himself "the resurrection and the life"—there could not remain a single obstacle in the way of salvation to every one living or dying, in the consequent state of justified innocent infancy.

To clear away every shade of doubt or misgiving from the fair face of this most grateful conclusion, it was deemed proper in the third place to show that even the doctrines of Regeneration and Sovereign Election do not impair or limit the universality of infant salvation, since the former has to do only with those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and the latter is very clearly and uni-

formly connected, in Scripture, with the operative work of the Holy Spirit, which deals with man in his morally responsible nature and intellective character. And then, in the last place, we showed that "the final perseverance of the saints" was, equally with Regeneration and Sovereign Election, the work of the Divine Spirit, and rests solely in the "faithfulness of God." Who wants, or can imagine a better foundation for our faith? It rests upon the Rock of Ages.

Do not they who seek, through the instrumentality of their so-called *sacraments*, to supplement or to render more certain and efficacious the Divine plan of salvation by Christ, thereby deny the faith of God and perpetrate idolatry? The Israelites were none the less guilty of this crime, when they simply sought to associate the bewitching worship of Serapis, or the molten calf, of Baal, or of Ashtoreth, with their adoration of Jehovah. Perhaps no people were ever conscious of practicing sinful idolatry while actively engaged in it. The chosen nation were evidently betrayed very frequently into such unfaithfulness to God, through a prurient desire of improving, as they supposed, on the pure rites and simple form of worship which had been Divinely prescribed to them. We all need to "watch and pray

lest we enter into temptation." If we watch to best advantage we must first take care that we are well posted upon the rampart of God's truth ; and if we pray acceptably it must needs be always with an humble and docile mind.

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside."—*Cowper*.

"Seize, then, on truth where'er 'tis found,
Among your friends, among your foes ;
On Christian, or on heathen ground,
The plant's divine where'er it grows."—*Ibid.*

It is credited as a statistical fact well ascertained, that at least one-half of the human family die under seven years of age, and by far the greater part of these within the space of one year from their birth. Hence, from all nations and tongues and peoples upon the whole face of the earth, there is ever flowing a ceaseless tide of praise to God and the Lamb, as this redeemed host pours in through the portals of the New Jerusalem, where for ever and for ever they all go on improving their song and perfecting praise. And whose heart can fail to respond, Amen ! Glory to God in the highest !

What though rivulets of scalding tears do trickle to the earth, as this bright throng of baby spirits ascends into Heaven. Those tears but soften and subdue the aching

hearts that pour them forth, and washing away much vanity of spirit and heedlessness of mind, bring the tempted and imperiled souls of the bereaved closer to that Cross from which—

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast.”—*Pope.*

There, at the foot of the Cross of Calvary, through faith in Him who sanctified and hallowed it, we become assured “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Thus, often, the tears of earth are, by the grace of God, converted into precious pearls of eternal life. And the older with the younger come to be set as gems in the crown of Christ’s rejoicing. What a mercy, if the death of the child prove the life of the parent, by leading the latter to seek for consolation where it can only be had ; and where it may be obtained for both time and eternity ! He who is abundantly able to give such comfort has said, “O thou afflicted and tossed with the tempest, when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.”

“Behold, his reward is with him—and his work before him.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ;

He shall gather the lambs with His arms,

And carry them in His bosom.”—*Isa. xl., 10, 11.*

